

COMMENTARY

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COMMENTARY

AMERICA'S UN-MARXIST REVOLUTION

Mr. Truman Embarks on a Politically Managed Economy

DANIEL BELL

AFTER a decade and a half, an adequate political characterization of the New Deal era is still to be written. True, there have been historical analogies inspired by the flavor and verve of Roosevelt himself: Roosevelt was a temporizing Solon, whose political reforms sought to stave off the revolution of the propertyless masses; Roosevelt was a Tiberius Gracchus, a patrician who deserted his class to become the people's

THE groundswell of liberalism that elected Harry Truman and the 81st Congress caught even the most experienced political observers off balance; what is more, political analyses published since the election have been remarkably cautious and uncertain, lacking the usual assured hindsight of journalism. In part, as DANIEL BELL here suggests, this reflects the fact that the march of American history and the evolution of our economic patterns have leaped ahead of our customary ways of thinking and writing about them. A revolution in politics has caught us unawares. This article is an effort to suggest some of the basic factors that have made for the transformation, and to point to the unsolved problems that lie ahead for the Truman administration and for the American political system. Mr. Bell has taught social science at the University of Chicago, and has contributed to previous numbers of COMMENTARY; he has also written widely for various magazines and professional journals. He is an associate editor of *Fortune*. He was born in New York City in 1919 and attended the College of the City of New York and Columbia University.

tribune; Roosevelt was a Louis Napoleon, an ambitious, power-hungry demagogue, manipulating first one class and then another while straddling them all in order to assure his own personal rule. Such baroque speculations confuse rather than enlighten. Certainly, they shed little light on the way governmental action gives rise to new combinations of interests and the operation of these shifting coalitions. And that is the raw stuff of politics.

If the nature of the Roosevelt revolution confounds the strait-jacketed theorists, how much more of a mystery is Harry S. Truman—whose personality does not lend itself to the historical metaphors which always flowered around FDR. How does one classify an American president who, without the rhetoric of the prescribed political sonorities, tells the people of the United States: "We have rejected the discredited theory that the fortunes of the nation should be in the hands of a privileged few. We have abandoned the 'trickle-down' concept of national prosperity. . . . Wealth should be created for the benefit of all. The recent election shows that the people of the United States are in favor of this kind of society and want to go on improving it."

It is true that such sentiments can be found dotting all of Roosevelt's speeches. Yet twelve years after the last New Deal reforms—so great is the Roosevelt magic that one

forgets that no major social legislation was enacted after 1937—Mr. Truman submits a budget message which proposes *more* far-reaching social and economic advances than any budget message in our history. It includes funds for almost fifty new and important government agencies, as well as for strengthening the important regulatory agencies of government. But the most important sections are the passages dealing with industrial capacity, for a full employment economy can be dangerously inflationary if production does not expand rapidly enough to meet the new demands created by high employment and large government spending. In his State of the Union speech, the President proposed “immediate legislation to deal with this problem of capacity and supply. . . . To the extent that the facts reveal the need, [legislation] should provide additional authority to deal more effectively with the inadequacy of capacity and supply.” The steel industry was singled out as an immediate case in point and the President asked authority for the “construction of such facilities directly if action by private industry fails to meet our needs.”*

NOTE, in Mr. Truman’s messages, the word *needs*. For the American government is acknowledging that one of its primary tasks is to set up a human, as well as a house-keeping and economic budget, and thereby to direct the resources of the country to fulfilling human needs. The alternative, on which we have been operating for one hundred and fifty years, is to have resources siphoned off to suit the preferences and whims of those who have the money to command goods—this is the “free market” or “free enterprise.” The emphasis on needs is an implicit admission that the present distribution of income, exerting its force freely on the market mechanism, works against the principle of general welfare.

*The first significant step was taken, virtually unnoticed, in the Sparkman-Murray-Patman bill. The measure sets up a fund of fifteen billion dollars that would be available to states and regional authorities such as TVA, to expand production.

For years liberals, the democratic Left, and the conservatives have so allowed the repetition of their high-flown phrases to dull their reflexes that the full measure of the Truman pronouncements is yet to be taken. Here is no Thermidorian reaction against FDR, as many liberals feared, but the continuation of a revolutionary impulse, however vague and confused. At the same time, it is far from an invasion of the capital by naked socialism, as certain hysterical reactionaries shrilly insist. The prevailing ideologies, on both Left and Right, are still unconsciously obedient to the Marxist notion that only a bald class struggle reveals the “realities” of politics. As a result, the importance of Truman’s program has not been seriously appreciated. The Fair Deal, in its own prosaic fashion, is a revival on a new plane of what, in the early days of *laissez-faire*, was called political economy. It is a reflection of the fact that modern industrial society can no longer be left to the direction of any one privileged interest group but has to submit to political management and political direction. It is a square assertion of the legitimacy of an economy managed by government. The question naturally arises, managed for whom?

DE TOCQUEVILLE once wrote that historians who live in aristocratic ages are inclined to read all events through the will and character of heroic individuals, whereas historians of democratic times deal perforce with general causes. With the dazzling glamor of the Roosevelt charm behind us, perhaps we may now, in the gray light of Harry Truman, see where we have been and where we may be going.

The public face of the New Deal was a set of sweeping social reforms. Quite naively, some liberal writers, and indeed Franklin Roosevelt himself, called the New Deal an assertion of human rights over property rights. But such terms carry little meaning either philosophically or pragmatically. Are support prices for farmers a human right or a property right?

The meaning of the New Deal revolution is to be found in a different set of terms.

What has been emerging out of seventeen years of confused political pulling and hauling has been a definition of politics in terms of group rights and, more vaguely, an implicit theory of justice which sets limits to group prerogatives. This allows us to look at major social legislation in terms of interest blocs: in functional terms, labor, farmer, business; in social terms, the aged, the veterans, the minority groups; in regional terms, the Missouri Valley Authority, Columbia Valley Authority, St. Lawrence waterway. Equally important, such a formulation provides a valid framework for political analysis of the past and future.

The social content of American history has been obscured in the past thirty-five years by such blanket phrases as "the democratic heritage," "the land of individualism," "the American Dream," and so forth; and this blurring of lines has been abetted also by simplistic generalizations on the class struggle between Finance Capital and the Little People. Yet in the last election it could be discerned among the electorate, and between the lines of the press, that Americans were rather weary of political thinking dominated by clichés. The liberals finally grew tired of warning against a finance-imperialism that the "financiers" refused to supply. The conservatives felt rather foolish shrieking communism at a government which was obviously nothing of the sort.

American history carries meaning, I think, largely through the prism of group struggles. This prism separates out its distinctive qualities more sharply than either the cruder Marxist lens of the class struggle—which is applicable only to the early years of the Republic—or the optical illusion of the past fifty years which refused to recognize distinctions at all and regarded the least mention of "group" or "class" as in essence subversive.

In historical perspective, I believe we can see that the movement of American politics has been from a sharp struggle between merchant-capitalist and farmer at the founding of the Republic, to multiple group struggles in which identifications and loyalties shifted rapidly as the society expanded and became

industrialized. The temporary victory of one group, the business class, at the end of the 19th century, brought with it an attempt to identify democracy with the narrower category of "free enterprise." But the depression broke the crust of ideological unity and revealed the manifold group conflicts beneath.

It is no wonder then that the American political system, offering us a complex series of class struggles, group struggles, and national unity, still mystifies both the European observer and the American participant. Yet if the European and American remembered their first and surprisingly accurate premise—that Americans have been a materialist people concerned with practical achievement and not with ideologies—all would follow naturally. For when one's goal is immediate material advantage, rather than the inflation of class pride and the preservation of status, compromise is the natural way of attaining one's ends. A second premise, generally known but whose implications are never drawn, is the tremendous diversity of interests, sectional and functional, that have arisen successively in our history and the permutations possible in such multiplicity.

The earliest struggles in American history were direct class struggles between the merchant group, represented by the Federalists, and the agrarians, represented by the Democrats. Society was split fairly cleanly between two groups with antagonistic interests (tariff, cheap money, etc.). The unadorned way in which class conflict was discussed by the "founding fathers" is strikingly documented in the Federalist papers. As in the later struggle between the English landed gentry and the manufacturing class over the protectionist corn laws, a decisive victory for either would have decided the basic character of the society. But that early American plutocracy, the Eastern merchants, proved to be an unstable social group that was incapable of maintaining the political initiative. So the Federalists lost. Yet the Democrats—in the face of the economic facts of life of a burgeoning capitalism—could not really win, and the "Jeffersonian revolution" was something that Jef-

person found easier to promise than to execute.

It is at this point that we find the seeds of the peculiarly American party system. The mutual defeat of attempts to establish exclusive class domination left the social system undefined from the very start. It was not predominantly mercantile, slave, free, agrarian, industrial, or proletarian. The wealthy groups, having lost direct political control, sought to work indirectly through the politician. But in a rapidly shifting society, whose very hugeness casts up a variety of conflicting interests, a politician can succeed only if he is a broker and the party system an agency of mediation. As late as 1892, Marx's co-worker, Friedrich Engels, wrote in a letter to his friend Sorge:

"There is no place in America for a *third* party, I believe. The divergence of interests even in the *same* class group is so great in the tremendous area that wholly different groups and interests are represented in each of the two big parties, depending upon the locality, and almost each particular section of the possessing class has its representatives in each of the two parties to a very large degree, though *today* big industry forms the core of the Republicans on the whole, just as the big landowners of the South form that of the Democrats. The apparent haphazardness of this jumbling together is what provides the splendid soil for the corruption and the plundering of the government that flourishes there so beautifully."

BY THE turn of the 19th century, however, the growing industrial class had scored a smashing economic victory. With that victory came some efforts to dissolve the structure of group interests by developing a pervasive political ideology, one which could also serve the emergent national feeling. One such attempt was the doctrine of imperialism in the "manifest destiny" of Beveridge and the Americanism of Franklin Giddings. This was alien to a heterogeneous people, or at least premature. The second and more successful effort was in the identification of democracy with capitalism. The early com-

mercial class had feared democracy as a *political* instrument whereby the "swinish multitude" (Burke) would prepare the way for a radical despotism. The ideology of victorious industrial capitalism defined democracy almost completely in agreeable *economic* terms, as liberty of contract.

This equation of democracy with capitalism was so complete that there was no trace of self-consciousness or hypocrisy. So, during the mine strike of 1902, a leading operator, George F. Baer, could state with heated conviction: "The rights and interests of the laboring man will be protected and cared for—not by the labor agitators, but by the Christian men to whom God in his infinite wisdom has given the control of the property interests of the country."*

It was at this time too that the industrial group sought to translate its economic ascendancy into politics. For the first time in its political history the United States had a national political boss, Mark Hanna. Yet even this overlordship was brief, for as Hanna himself put it, the country was "too big." Because of the location of industry and agriculture, various regional interests would come into conflict and coordinated political pressure would break down. The Populists were still strong and the two strong presidents of the period, Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, viewed themselves as mediators between social groups rather than as agents of any one of them. While powerful corporations could at times dominate specific state legislatures, only in rare instances were combinations of specific corporate interests able to dictate national legislative policy. To a large extent, therefore, the political arena has maintained itself as one in which compromise and fluid combination have been the means of enacting laws.

If the dominant business class was unable to exercise direct control of the society, it could yet establish its ideological hegemony. While the middle class (small farmers and

*Asked Finley Peter Dunne's Mr. Hennessy: "What d'ye think iv th' man down in Pennsylvania who says th' Lord an' him is partners in a coal mine?" "Has he divided th' profits?" replied Mr. Dooley.

businessmen, and many professionals) had supported the sporadic anti-trust and anti-monopoly outbursts of the first decade of the century, such opinions and movements were dissolved by the subsequent two decades of war, prosperity, and propaganda. In a singular sense, the period between 1920 and 1929 was the only period in American history unmarked by strong interest-group struggles. (The abortive La Follette campaign was a hollow attempt to revive the thunder of the pre-war period.) The victory of American capitalism was complete, and history was rewritten in its image. Political philosophy, which in the hands of our 18th- and 19th-century predecessors had clearly outlined the struggles of American interest groups, had given way to an ideological *Gleichschaltung*.

THIS unity burst with the bubble of prosperity because the philosophers of free enterprise, rugged or otherwise, did not understand the realities of the "socialized" economy that had come into being. They had failed to grasp the degree to which this market economy imposes a particular type of dependency upon everyone. Business enterprise and the farmer are dependent upon distant markets and governmental benevolence. Workers are dependent upon unions, efficient management, and social welfare benefits. Urbanization meanwhile atomizes the family and the small-town community, making the community something that has to be re-knit by voluntary association.* Out of this dependency, bared by the depression, a convulsive drive to security arose.

In a pure market society, as Marx once phrased it, each man thinks for himself and no one plans for all. Today it is no longer individual men who are in the market but particular collectivities, each of which tries to exempt itself from the risks of the market.

* De Tocqueville recognized the growth of associations as a peculiarly American response to a developing industrial civilization. But liberal and conservative political theory continued to recognize only the individual and the state, and free associations never received a certificate of political legitimacy. Their existence as political factors was admitted only to be stigmatized as "pressure groups."

Inevitably, the measures each group resorts to for protection provoke governmental concern that the entire economy not be overturned in the anarchic stampede to safety.

The large corporate blocs act through prices which they themselves, rather than the market, set; controlling as they do a large portion of the market, they may in times of depression prefer to keep prices high by reducing the volume of output—this will be especially the case when they have high fixed costs.

Trade unions, in turn, seek to protect themselves by restricting the entry of workers into particular industries, resisting technological change, and controlling the movement of wages. The latter particularly tends to introduce its own rigidities into the economy. Unions defend wage rigidities on the ground that wages are not only a cost but, on the opposite side of the ledger, add up to the consumer demand, and that falling wages mean less buying and further cuts in production. This may be true, but costs are borne by an individual employer and a high consumer demand can only come through government spending.

Similarly, the farmer, unable to control the movement of prices, demands crop insurance, price supports, subsidies, and other artificial crutches to avoid the ravages of a free economy.

These changes in the workings of the economy were themselves sufficient to call for sweeping government intervention. But in addition, there are also the after-effects of a war economy, and the demands of postwar reconstruction. Government spending today sops up and pumps back into the economy one-fifth of the national income. Before the depression years, government spending accounted for one-fifteenth of the national income (1927) and during the New Deal period, for about one-tenth. Certainly the manner in which the money is obtained and the choice of areas in which it is spent exert a powerful lever on the nation's economy.

Nor is this high budget a transient affair. An equally important aspect of the government's role in the economy is the new situa-

tion of the annual fixed charge on the national debt, an amount which this year reaches thirteen cents of the budget dollar. The more than five billion dollars that the government will pay out this year in interest payments is greater than the total Federal budget receipts for any year, excepting the First World War, until 1940.

What is amazing in retrospect is that while the commitment to a politically managed economy could have been foreseen, we were so badly deficient in organizing our economic thinking for it. A managed economy requires a picture of the over-all economy in motion. Classical economics, in its dependence on price theory, sees the economy in terms of an infinite number of single units rather than a small number of basic aggregates. A managed economy requires not only that we have a housekeeping budget for the government as the large spending unit, but also an economic budget that states the major magnitudes of economic interaction for society as a whole—the total amount of goods and services produced in a year's time and the total amount of income paid out. Through these figures we can chart the gaps in consumer spending and in investment and, if necessary, make up the differences by appropriate fiscal measures. Yet it was only in 1936 that the Department of Commerce brought out its first report on national income, and estimates were projected back to 1929. Gathering of data about gross national product, the other side of the economic balance sheet, came even later, being published for the first time in March 1942, and then the series was computed back for earlier years. The two indexes as the pulse beat of economic health were first combined and published together only in President Roosevelt's budget message in 1945.

IN THE past decade, we have seen the emergence of a new set of powerful and self-conscious group interests, along with the directed economy they require. A basic and fundamental shift in the relations of economic power to political power has occurred. In the market society, peoples' wants were

registered by their "dollar votes," as part of the automatic interaction of supply and demand. The sum total of individual dollars-and-cents decisions, operating independently of each other, added up, as Bentham thought, to a social decision, e.g., the general consensus. Thus, when decisions on the allocation of resources operated through the market, dollars, not ideology, determined what was to be produced. In this sense, economics was the key to social power, and politics its pale reflection.

But politics, operating through the government, has more and more become a means of registering a social and economic decision. Here, instead of acting independently as in a market, the individual is forced to work consciously with others, and the particular collectivities created by the economy become the vital organs of the body politic. Since in a managed economy, politics, not dollars, will determine what is to be produced, the intervention of the government will not only sharpen pressure group identifications, but also force each to adopt an ideology which can justify its claims, and which can square with some concept of "national interest."

Thus it is that there will be brought into the public arena a variety of conflicts that have tended hitherto to avoid public attention. There will be clashes between industry and government on the key question of capital expansion, between sectional interests seeking to build up their share of industry, and even between unions when they are forced to become spokesmen for their respective industries. But in a more subtle sense, the cleavage will be within the individual himself, between his role in making individual economic decisions and his responsibilities as a citizen. For example, during the war some government officials wanted to know how many people would voluntarily forego the purchase of a new suit so that a certain amount of textiles could be allocated to the army without rationing. A poll showed that almost everyone patriotically agreed that manufacturers should stop making civilian suits and use their yardage for army uniforms. But the individual fingered his own

worn-out suit and decided that *his* purchase of only *one* suit wouldn't hurt the war effort. Where commodities were rationed, the black market represented the sum total of individual decisions while the OPA fixed price was the social decision.

The distinction between the "sum total of individual decisions" and the "social decision" is more than a semantic one. The confusion is made in part by Mr. Truman himself. In his speech before the National Planning Association in which he sought to distinguish between "controls" and "planning," the President pointed out that in our daily activity we all plan. This is true. But in such activities we each plan for ourselves, and the Utilitarian philosophers, presupposing a natural harmony of society arising out of a division of labor and the interdependence of man, thought that the sum total of each man's planning would be helpful for all. This is the basis of the doctrine that each man following his own self-interest would help society. But what government planning presupposes is some over-all mechanism responsible for the crucial decisions regarding the balancing of the economy. Thus, each man is *not* fully free to follow his own self-interest. There is an over-riding social decision, established before action, which tends to shape each man's action. And this social decision is necessarily ideological.

IF, IN coming years, ideological arguments will increasingly influence the political decision, what are the lines that will be drawn? How will private group policy square with national interest? There are signs that a new debate on the character of freedom is in the offing, a debate which will determine the course of the Truman administration, and the pattern of American politics for years to come.

Of the three major functional groups in our society, the farmers are in the best position. Neither labor nor business will attack them, although the Republicans in the last election did raise the issue of high support prices. The farmers' argument has the weight of American tradition; everyone knows that

an independent middle class is a guarantee of freedom. The simple paradox, however, is that this old middle class today stakes its freedom upon dependence, upon continuing government support.

The theme of the business groups, "free enterprise," is by now somewhat frayed in its dull repetitiveness. Yet it is a pity that the phrase has become a cliché, for an active commitment to its principles would be an important contribution to the defense of freedom. Many business spokesmen decry government intervention (a "hybrid Keynesian welfare state," Lewis Brown of Johns Manville accurately called it) as interfering with "perfectly natural fluctuations" of the economy. Yet what such ideologues have to learn is that economics follows no "natural laws." If it did, the ability of man by conscious intelligence to master and transform his social environment would be denied. Economics is not a science of discovering a set of hidden supra-human absolutes and obeying them, but an assertion that if certain human goals are desired then certain means must be fashioned to attain them.

If business is sincere in its fear of statism *per se*, not merely of a statism that it does not control, then one of the major factors contributing to the growth of fascism in other countries will have been removed here.* If Hayek, Jewkes, et al., are to be applied without discount and at full coinage, then the conservative party must spell out a real anti-monopoly approach. The problem, however, is that business in action rarely demonstrates that sense of social responsibility which its ideologues ascribe to it. To demand today simply that the economy should be "uncontrolled" is meaningless: even with the best will in the world, one cannot spend forty billion dollars without practically *determining* economic developments. Whether significant elements of business will gracefully accept the mandate of the recent election for increased government

*In this sense one of the key doctrines in the revolutionary Marxist theory—that the capitalist class, when threatened, imposes fascism as a last resort—is being tested here and in Britain.

activity or—in blind resentment at loss of social power—will respond by supporting extreme reactionary elements (these might demand a complete economic hands-off policy, or a naked statism in the name of Americanism, or both)—this remains to be seen.

Nor has labor a full-blown ideology. In the past it has, largely through the AFL, adapted itself slowly, pragmatically, to the industrial environment and functioned there as a vested interest group. Only in recent years, where the new unions operating at the heart of the economy have become sensitive to the over-all economic situation, has a positive attitude toward government emerged. And in these groups it has been largely the influence of the New Deal intellectuals and new influential figures in the government bureaucracy, who, identifying themselves with labor, have sought to provide a rationale for government's role.

IF, AS Justice Douglas claims, labor was the prime promoter of the human-welfare state, it acted unconsciously and without contrived purpose. And large sections of labor, particularly the AFL, are not too happy over that welfare state. The dilemma arises out of two conflicting roles. As a *trade union*, labor is concerned largely with creating a job monopoly, and getting protection for the particular industry it serves in order to assure continued employment. In that sense it tends to become integral to the economy, and at times works in collusion with the employer against the rest of the economy. However, it is also part of the *labor movement*, where it concerns itself with the larger social framework and presses for government intervention to assure the things it wants: social security, protection of organization, and, most important, government spending to maintain purchasing power.

A conflict of roles must make itself felt in the contradiction between the two needs. For example, both the AFL and the CIO shipping unions have whipped up a strong agitation to prevent ECA from shipping a higher proportion of Marshall Plan goods in foreign bottoms. Their simple concern is the

rising unemployment in the industry. Yet rational economics tells us (a) that if we wish to sell abroad, others must be able to sell to us or provide services, and (b) shipping plays a proportionately more important role in the economies of Norway and England than it does in America.

We find that the powerful railway unions as well as the miners oppose the development of the St. Lawrence waterway, again for the purpose of protecting their members' livelihood, although such a step is necessary to provide cheap power to New England and cheaper water transportation for the mid-West. Another illustration is the stand of the AFL cement workers in favor of the basing-point system of enforcing uniform prices throughout the industry, which, as the Farmers Union points out in an attack on the system, is a means of keeping local industries down. The legitimate private fear of the union is that the breaking up of the basing-point system will force some plants to move and thus uproot the workers and their families.

How labor will square its many *union* problems, its stake in specific industries, with its wider *labor* perspective is still a moot point.

While such problems are now beginning to be felt, the real bite is still to come. Quite belligerently, but uncritically, many unions, particularly in the CIO, now believe that full employment can be maintained only by government spending. But in a full employment economy some government control of wage policy is necessary if we are to avoid inflation and inequities. Can we allow strong unions to gain added wages for their members only because of their concentrated power or strategic economic position without reference to the economic situation as a whole?

Under full employment an increase in the general wage level that is not to be inflationary has to be related to increased productivity—and inequities can only be solved by a national wage policy. Is the labor movement willing to surrender a large part of its rights as trade unions to set its own wage policies, and is it ready to subordinate its

individual wage bargains to a national wage policy?

THE fundamental questions facing the Fair Deal and the American political community, then, are: just how is the managed economy to be managed, and how are we to achieve a popularly accepted definition of an over-all social interest?

If we accept Keynes' proposition that in a managed economy the major government controls should be largely fiscal rather than bear directly on production—to what extent can we say the Truman program is heading for this society? If we take the President's threat to the steel industry at face value, presumably he might go even further. The Truman program is a clear-cut assertion of the duties of government in a managed economy. It has established a precedent—by giving sanction to the new tradition of social intervention—whose importance to the future of American politics cannot be overemphasized. Yet in the over-all assessment of its policies, one finds that there is still a wide gap between program and practice. Washington remains today largely a giant pork-barrel with various groups converging to exert pressure for their needs. The present moment is one of legislation, staffing bureaus, working out rules of procedure, political and sectional maneuvering. But in the not too distant future these matters will have to give way to a consideration of political fundamentals.

A general theory as to how the satisfaction of varied group interests may be harmonized with the general welfare remains to be worked out. We have a managed economy, but the principles of management remain undefined. Mr. Truman presumably is going to give the people "what they want." But this policy brings into prominence our second question: whether transient majority coalitions can offer a convincing theory of social justice.

We are floundering, both in practice and

in analysis, because we no longer know what holds a society together. The political strength of the American "founding fathers," and what imparted an amazing sense of breadth and vitality to their discussions, was the fact that their thinking was rooted both in tradition and in a coherent moral order that assigned man—and men—a certain place both in nature and vis-à-vis one another. Their moral conceptions were rooted either in Locke's theory of natural rights or in Hobbes' theory of the need of law and authority to keep the passions of men in check; out of these arose conflicting descriptions of the rights and privileges of men. But we have little basis today for accepting either of these political myths. And where group relations amid the multiple identities created by varying allegiances are mediated largely through the mesh of politics, what is the basis of the over-riding unity of our social groups?

In a self-regulating market, the unit of action is the individual and an intelligent choice is largely the hedonistic calculus of his own desires. But our own time places a premium on social intelligence and on a new view of citizenship. Necessarily man is a member of more than one association; necessarily the decisions of these different associations determine the general fate. If a democratic society is to survive—and by that term I mean simply the principle of toleration among groups—then some new sense of civic obligation must arise that will be strong enough to command the allegiance of all groups and provide a principle of equity in the distribution of the rewards and privileges of society.

It will be up to the Truman administration—and eventually it will be up to the American body politic—to arrange the relationship between government and people in a way that permits this civic sense to emerge and sustain itself. Can it be done? At the moment, the omens are ambiguous enough to discourage despair without exactly encouraging hope.

THE BLACK JEWS OF ETHIOPIA

An Expedition to the Falashas

WOLF LESLAU

IN 1946 I undertook a scientific expedition, under the joint auspices of the Guggenheim Foundation and the Viking Fund, to study the languages, folklore, and traditional history of Ethiopia. In the course of this expedition I decided to include a special survey of the Falashas, Ethiopia's famed "Black Jews," who for centuries have lived in the most remote areas of the country.

Until recently, the Falashas believed themselves to be the sole surviving Jews of the world; and since their rediscovery in the 18th century they have constituted an unending mystery to the scientific investigator.

Everything concerning their origin and historical past is a matter for speculation. Whether they are ethnically Jews; whence and when they migrated to Ethiopia, or, on the other hand, whether they represent a part of the native Ethiopian population which was converted at some remote time to Juda-

ism, and if so, by whom—all of these problems still go unsolved. From the available evidence, only one thing is clear: their Judaism seems to date from some time before the compilation of the Mishnah and the Talmud, for they are completely ignorant of all the religious writings of the period since the Dispersion.

Arriving in Addis Ababa, I became friendly with the leading spiritual figures among the Falashas—Professor Taamrat Emanuel, one of the finest scholars in Ethiopia, and Ato Taddese Yakob, the Director of Customs in the Ethiopian government, and these men helped me to contact the Falashas living in the region around the city of Gondar.

Accompanied by two Falasha guides, their servants, and a cook who had been provided for me through the courtesy of Princess Tenegn Worq of the Ethiopian royal family, and Bitwaddad Andarge, governor of Begemder, son-in-law of the Emperor, I left Gondar for the interior. News of my departure had somehow preceded me, for after only an hour's mule ride I was accosted by two young Falashas armed with rifles who suddenly appeared on the crest of a hill. After one more hour had passed fifty Falashas, both old and young and armed with rifles and spears, emerged from the thicket and joined my entourage. The strong, resolute expressions which one saw on the faces of these men, set against the rugged and mountainous landscape, was an impressive sight and helped me to understand more readily the centuries-long resistance of the Falashas during the punitive wars of the Ethiopian kings.

The source for our information about these wars are the Ethiopian Royal Chronicles. But these records, too, since they deal exclusively with the military campaigns of the Ethiopian kings, cannot give us any real insight into

FOR centuries the Falashas, the "Black Jews" of Ethiopia, have been the subject of contradictory, often wild, reports and speculations, making them out to be almost everything from the descendants of the lost tribes of Israel to figments of an explorer's imagination. WOLF LESLAU, one of the world's foremost authorities on Ethiopia, here tells from first-hand knowledge what he learned of the Ethiopian Jews on a recent expedition to the country, against the background of what has been already known and recorded. Dr. Leslau is the author of several books on Ethiopic philology and has contributed widely to scholarly journals. He was born in 1906, studied at the universities of Vienna and Paris, and has been on the staff of the École Nationale des Langues Orientales (Paris), École des Hautes Études (Paris and New York), and the Asia Institute (New York). A more extended study of the Falashas by Dr. Leslau will appear in the *Falasha Anthology* to be published in the series of Yale Judaica Research.

the past religious, social, and cultural circumstances of Falasha life. One historical fact is indubitable: a fierce though intermittent war between Ethiopians and Falashas was fought until the 17th century. And although the motivation for this war can be chiefly found in the Ethiopian kings' conversion to Christianity, there is also no doubt that its purpose was more often political than religious and was aimed at destroying the Falashas' independence.

It was King Malak Sagad, a potent figure in Ethiopian history, who in the 16th century succeeded, after a long and bitter war, in subjugating the Falashas and executing their warrior-chief Rada'i. On this occasion, as on many others, the Ethiopian historian expresses admiration for the courageous Falasha women, who, rather than fall into the hands of their conquerors, hurled themselves into a deep ravine.

But even after this great defeat the Falashas stubbornly defended their fast-disappearing independence. In the 17th century, a great Falasha chief, Gedeon, arose and revived his people for a time by making an alliance with a group of Ethiopian chiefs who were in rebellion against the King Susneyos. At the last, Gedeon was killed and the Falasha army decisively vanquished. Expelled from Semyen, their home country for centuries, and dispersed throughout the land, many Falashas lost their faith and converted to Christianity. It is at this point that the Falashas disappear from the pages of the Ethiopian Royal Chronicles.

SURROUNDED now by my advance-guard party of Falashas, I continued my journey, crossing rivers and valleys and trudging up mountains. Soon we were on a high, beautiful plateau, swept by cooling winds and covered with trees and lush long grass. Here, on this green tableland encircled by mountains, Falashas have lived for centuries. Outside the village of Ambworo, one of the advance guard blew a warning trumpet. At its summons men came swarming from all directions to greet me. The Falasha priests, dressed in ceremonial robes and

sheltered by sunshades, held a ceremony on the top of a hill, sanctifying my arrival by prayers in the old Ethiopian language, Gheez, accompanied by a music beat out on drums and a kind of metal gong.

When I first saw the Falashas I asked myself whether I would be able to distinguish them from other Ethiopians, whether they possessed distinctive physiognomical features of their own. I decided at first that in the great majority the Falashas resembled the Amharas, the main group of the Ethiopian population, and like them, had finely cut, regular features, and skin of a light black color. Later, however, when I went to Eritrea, the most northern part of Ethiopia, I found that the Bogos, an indigenous Agau tribe of the region, bore a great resemblance to many of the Falashas I had seen. The Falashas themselves believe that they look like the rest of the Ethiopian population; indeed one Falasha informed me that Ethiopians say that they can recognize a Falasha only by the heavy mineral odor of water which clings to him as a result of his incessant ritual ablutions.

In all matters of outward appearance and living conditions, little distinguishes them from the native Ethiopians. The Falasha's dress is the same (the universal costume: a cotton toga called the *shamma* and long or knee-length pants) and his villages, composed of circular huts made of branches, and covered—or thatched—with thick grass, with granaries built of dried mud alongside them, look like those seen everywhere in the Ethiopian hinterland. Most often, these villages, like the Ethiopian ones, are placed beside a river, though the Falashas have, besides the ordinary reasons for such a location in a semi-tropical country, the added religious necessity of complying with the hygienic injunctions of the Mosaic law.

Living in a predominantly agricultural country, the Falashas have a special position as skilled artisans, supplying their Ethiopian neighbors with linen cloth, kitchen utensils, and farming equipment. Walking through a Falasha village, one sees on every hand evidence of their various skills: in one corner,

above a loom built over a pit in the ground, a man stands weaving linen; in another, a blacksmith is working iron utensils such as axes, sickles, and knives over an open fire; and in still another, a Falasha woman is fashioning pitchers, pots, and small granaries out of clay. All these products are sold in the market of the nearest town or among the surrounding villages. Despite this small trade, the Falashas can no more be considered merchants than the peasant who sells his produce. Indeed, the Falashas could never become merchants because of their strict observance of the Hebrew religious code: the Ethiopian merchant must journey by caravan, which would mean that the Falasha would have to travel on the Sabbath and eat food prepared by strangers.

Of course, the Falashas also cultivate the land; outside every Falasha village stretch fields on which they grow crops of wheat, barley, and millet. One often sees them at work there, plowing or tilling the fields behind one ox or a team of oxen. These fields are never the property of the Falashas, who work them on a sharecropper basis, paying rent to the owner in the form of annual supplies of wheat.

ALMOST every large Falasha village has a synagogue, called the *Masgid*, with at least one resident priest. The hut housing the synagogue looks no different in its exterior from the average Falasha dwelling; it is circular or oblong, thatched with straw, and, depending on its size, has two or four entrances. Inside, the synagogues are also rather uniform: in the village of Atcharge in the Sequelt region the synagogue's interior was one large room partitioned down the middle by a wall as high as a man; at Gana it was built of stone and was also divided into two sections. In the synagogue of Gana the outer section forms a circle which surrounds a quadrangular space called *Queddesta Queddusan* or the "Holy of Holies."

Only the high priests, the priests, and the deacon are permitted to enter the Holy of Holies, where the Torah and the ceremonial clothes of the priests are kept. In a synagogue

that lacks a Holy of Holies, the Torah is fastened to a board attached high on the east wall, facing Jerusalem, and the robes are stored in the priests' house.

The synagogue is also decorated with drapes of cotton cloth of various colors that hang from the walls and festoon the Torah. A bench, called "the place of repose," is so placed that the priests may rest after their devotions. On the Sabbath and the high holidays the deacons spread grass and various herbs on the floor of the synagogue, giving the rooms a refreshing country odor.

The priesthood is not a hereditary office. Its members are recruited from the entire community, which participates as a body in nominating candidates. After a candidate is proposed, the high priest then confers with the other priests, called *Kahen*, and together they examine his character and degree of learning. If any member of his family as far back as the seventh generation has ever committed adultery, or has had a bodily defect of any kind, the candidate cannot be elected to the priesthood.

After passing these tests, the candidate has to bring two offerings to the synagogue: a goat for the remission of his sins and a sheep as a gift to the priests; the goat is burned as a sacrifice and the sheep is eaten by the priests and the deacon. Before receiving his final blessing, the candidate then brings a bull to the synagogue, slaughters it himself, and all members of the village, men and women, attend a feast at which the roasted bull is eaten. Also, as part of the celebration, the people of the village bring gifts of money for the priests, each according to his means. The ordination ceremony then takes place: the priest places a turban on the candidate's head, clothes him in a shirt, and from that time on the new priest can take up his duties.

Once a priest, a Falasha can marry but cannot get divorced; if he does he can no longer function as a priest and becomes a *debtera*, that is, a learned man, who may perform prayers and aid priests in their various duties. In the event that his wife dies the priest can then remarry, but only a virgin.

The priest does not dress differently from other Falashas; the only badge of his office is a turban similar to those worn by priests in the Ethiopian Christian church.

Every large community supports a high priest, who is chosen from among the other priests. Both the high priest and the priests perform the daily prayers at the synagogue, pray for the sick, bless the circumcised child and the newly married. They also officiate at the slaughter of the sacrificial animal and bless the Sabbath and festival offerings. In all matters of community welfare and policy, the priests, as the chief spiritual authority, are looked to for guidance and leadership.

Yet despite their high position in the community, the priests do not constitute a privileged caste and must work like all other Falashas at the common occupations. There is one exception to this custom; since it is deemed beneath his dignity, the high priest is not permitted to work as a blacksmith.

ANOTHER religious institution found among the Falashas—the institution of monks—unmistakably reflects their long exposure to Christian influences. The Falashas claim that these monasteries can be traced back to the time of Abba Sabra who, in the 15th century, converted the son of the Ethiopian king Za’ra Yakob (1434-68) to Judaism. The royal convert then founded the monastic order and compiled many prayers which still form an important part of Falasha liturgy.

Any Falasha who wishes to renounce his worldly life may stand for the monkhood. In most cases, future monks are recruited from among those who have been servants to the monks. Before taking his vows, the candidate must obtain his parents’ consent. Once admitted to the brotherhood, a monk cannot marry and cannot have relations with other members of the community. If forced to come into contact with other Falashas, he is then considered tainted and must change his clothes and perform ritual ablutions.

It is not uncommon for a monk to leave his village or monastery and go to live in a deserted place in search of divine inspiration;

when he returns to his native village, he is then regarded as a saint. Falasha history numbers many such saints and a good part of their religious texts consist of the preachings of these men.

Having heard that there were several monks in Atcharge, I went to visit them, accompanied by two young Falashas. We arrived early in the morning. The monks’ huts were on the outskirts of the village, enclosed by a stone wall over which it was forbidden to pass. There were three monks at Atcharge, all very old and two of them nearly blind. They told me that they had vivid memories of all the Jews and Protestant missionaries who had visited them over the last fifty years. Indeed, at the start, they were reluctant to speak with me, fearing that I might be a Protestant missionary who had come to convert them. Only after the other Falashas reassured them did they consent to meeting me. Unfortunately, their conversation took the form of a religious monologue about the Jewish faith, interesting in itself but lacking information about the life led by monks or saints. While at Atcharge I also heard of the existence of nuns who live much the same as the monks, but I never found the opportunity to visit them.

THE Old Testament and especially the apocryphal “Book of Jubilees” constitute the chief sources of Falasha religious law and precept; both of these works, along with most of their religious literature, are written in the language of Gheez or Old Ethiopic. As I mentioned, Falasha Judaism is completely pre-Dispersion and therefore the Talmud or any of the other post-Biblical literary works, with the exception of fragmentary pieces of apocrypha, are unknown.

The Falashas only venerate the handwritten copy of the Torah and, unlike Western Jewry, do not think it sinful to place the copy of the Torah on the floor or to allow any member of the community, priest or layman, to touch it. The sacred copy of the Torah is read aloud on the Sabbath and the high holidays, and, since it is written in Gheez, a language not understood by the

ordinary Falasha, the priest must compose a running translation of the text into Amharic, the spoken language.

The Falashas also possess the "Commandments of the Sabbath." This writing is composed of two intertwined strands: myths of Arabic origin, which take their characters and plots from the Old Testament, combined with whole passages from the aforementioned "Book of Jubilees." An interesting conception of the Sabbath is expressed in its pages; the Sabbath is presented as a kind of saintly presence, a living personification of the holy.

For the benefit of the reader I give here an extract of a Falasha prayer:

"Halleluyah. Praise is comely for Thee, O God, majesty and honor. Thou Most High, who sittest upon a lofty throne, in that Thou art the grace of the just, the crown of the pure, the exaltation of the humble, the strength of the weak. Halleluyah to the only God, Holy, Holy, Holy. Thou art merciful and gracious, Thou exaltest the lowly and girdest the strong. Thou alone art kind and lord of justice and righteousness. Praise to God, the one, the Most High who sittest in Heaven. He is blessed in the height of heaven, His name is holy and pure. Praise and glory to God who is in heaven and on earth.

"Praised be the praised God, who protected me, delivered me, redeemed me, who spared me from my youth to that day I fell into hunger, pestilence, war, and sore illness; when I fell on the road, into caverns and water; when I fell to be carrion for the beasts of the field and the fowl of the air. God strengthened me even when He saw and knew all my sins and understood the uncleanness of my heart. He is just, merciful, longsuffering, abundant in mercy and justice. He was patient toward me, He the gracious, the merciful in the multitude of His mercies, His grace and patience; the gracious and the abundant in truth who protected me and brought me [to heaven] as He does to the righteous and the angels, for nought; not in our justice but in His justice. Blessed and glorified be the name of the blessed God."

All the cardinal points of Falasha belief

and ritual can be traced to this body of religious writings. The Falashas fervently believe in "the God of Israel, the invisible, the creator of heaven and earth," and, with obvious Christian undertones, in a Paradise and a Hell, in angels, and the Last Judgment. Another distinctive feature of Falasha belief is that they have their own Messiah, whose name is Theodore and who descends directly from the House of David. Before the Messiah's coming, the Falashas prophesy, all countries will engage in universal war. At the end of this war, the Messiah will appear and reign in Ethiopia for forty years before proceeding to Palestine.

Though their literature is written in Gheez, the spoken language of the Falashas conforms to that of their Ethiopian neighbors; in the Amharic-speaking regions they speak Amharic, the national language of Ethiopia, while in the northern, or Tigrigna-speaking region, they speak Tigrigna.

Formerly they spoke a language belonging to the Agau group, of Cushitic origin. In the mountainous regions of Semyen they seem still to speak some of the Agau dialects.

All historical evidence points to the fact that the Falashas have never at any period spoken Hebrew.

IT is, however, in their festivals and fast days that the Falashas show their greatest divergence from the Ethiopians, having weekly, monthly, lunar, and yearly festivals and fasts; some of the lunar festivals are celebrated only as reminders of the main festivals. A festival corresponding to Rosh Hashanah is called "The Light Has Appeared" and is celebrated on the 1st day of the 7th moon. "The Feast of Harvest" is celebrated the 12th day of the 3rd moon. The people bring to the synagogue measures of grain or baked bread and the priests bless it.

The first and last days of the Passover celebration (as well as of the Feast of Tabernacles) are named "the Holy" and no work or travel of any kind is permitted. As for the rest of Passover, work is also prohibited, though Falashas may travel to other

villages to visit relatives or friends. Throughout Passover the Falashas cannot eat anything that is leavened or fermented; at the close of the festival, the newly brewed beer and newly baked bread are brought to the synagogue as offerings to the priests.

On the Feast of the Tabernacles (Suk-koth) the Falashas do not build special booths since they look upon their own huts as the wilderness-booths of their exile. During this feast also, all work is suspended and the floors of their houses and the synagogue are covered with the leaves of a kind of palm and weeping willow tree. On the last day the priests and deacons carry the Torah in a grand procession through the village and the people gather at the synagogue and dance.

The Falashas also have several weekly, monthly, and yearly fasts. The most important is the Day of Atonement celebrated on the 10th day of the 7th moon. Before the end of the prayers they put a handful of millet on stones, leaving it there for the birds. This is done to commemorate the dead.

They repeat the same ceremony three times at the Fast of Supplication, observed on the twenty-ninth day of the eighth moon. On that day all the people carry stones on their shoulders, bring them to a hill outside the village, and place them in a circle around the priests who perform prayers. The Falashas, having no knowledge of Judaism's national holidays, do not celebrate Hanukka.

Following the detailed prescriptions laid down in the Falasha work, "The Commandments of the Sabbath," the Sabbath is celebrated in a very strict manner. The Falashas have various names for their transcendental embodiment of the Sabbath: "luminous," "vivifying," "rejoicing," "beloved." In their belief, the Sabbath is constantly interceding with God, asking him to forgive sinners their evil deeds if they observe the Sabbath properly.

On Friday evening the Falasha women start their elaborate preparations; before cooking the Sabbath food they must first wash their clothes and bodies in the river. The men also quit work at midday and perform the same ritual ablutions. As soon as the

sun sets, all the fires in the village are extinguished until the Sabbath is over. Throughout the Sabbath no work of any kind is permitted. Sexual intercourse, the circumcision of children, the burial of the dead, and all fasts, with the exception of the fast on the Day of Atonement, are prohibited.

In the regions I visited the practice of animal sacrifice still existed, though severely curtailed to only one sacrifice a year, which takes place on the fourteenth day of Nisan, the eve of Passover. This is due to the relative poverty of the community, for to hold a sacrifice it is necessary not only to purchase an animal but also to prepare bread and beer. All sacrifices are offered on an altar, called the "Area of Sacrifice," located on the north side of the synagogue. The sacrificial animal may be a bull, a ram, or a goat, meeting the Old Testament requirements of not being blind, lame, or having any bodily defect. A bar of salt, called *amolye*, is held over the animal's back during the ceremony in accordance with Leviticus 2:13—"and every oblation of thy meat offering shalt thou season with salt."

After the priest has finished his benediction, he leads the animal to the "Area of Sacrifice" and slaughters it with a two-edged knife designed especially for this purpose. Then, with the leaves of two different trees, he sprinkles the blood of the sacrificed animal over the "Area of Sacrifice" and the floor of the synagogue. The animal's meat is eaten that same day by the priests and the men of the village, and its bones, skin, and entrails are then burned and buried in a secret and far-off place. Custom forbids women from taking part in this ceremony.

IF A Falasha changes his faith or marries a non-Falasha he can be excluded from the community. On the other hand, any person who wishes to be converted to the Jewish faith must undergo a complicated initiation. To begin with, he must bring a bar of salt to the Falasha priest, who gives him in return a handful of peas, which, with water, will be his only sustenance for seven days. During this seven-day period, the priest instructs

him in the Mosaic Law. On the evening of the seventh day, the candidate for conversion washes his body and clothing, shaves his head, and comes to the synagogue where the priests and elders are gathered, carrying seven rods as a token of his seven days of religious preparation. The candidate then falls flat on his face, the priest strikes him a light blow on the back and then destroys the bundle of rods. At the end of this ceremony, the priest distributes fresh bread to the worshippers and the new convert.

Many Falasha customs are merely variations of customs practiced by the Ethiopians, yet several bear distinctly indigenous features. The ritual attending the birth of a child is certainly one of these. As soon as the woman begins her labor, she must enter, accompanied by two midwives, the "hut of blood" or "malediction," a special hut constructed on the outskirts of the village. If the child is a male, he is circumcised on the eighth day and the parents donate a sum of money to the priest. Meanwhile, the mother must remain for seven days in the "hut of blood," and can eat anything but meat. The mother remains in the "hut of blood" for fourteen days if the child is a female and on leaving it performs the ritual ablutions. She then enters another special hut, built by her relatives, the "hut of the woman-in-child-birth," and remains there for thirty-two days if the child is male, or sixty-four days if it is female. On the last day of the vigil, she again performs the ritual ablutions, shaves her head, and returns to her home. On her arrival a feast is given for the relatives and neighbors. Following which "the hut of the woman-in-childbirth" is burnt to the ground as an impure habitation.

The "hut of blood" is also used by a Falasha woman at the time of her menstrual period. She leaves her work and stays there for seven days, during which time she is considered impure. Her segregation is complete; her family can bring her food but must not cross the low stone wall which encircles the hut. On the seventh day the woman performs the ritual ablutions and washes her clothes but must remain outside the village through-

out the day, returning to her home only after sunset.

The occasions on which a Falasha can be rendered impure are numerous. Coming into contact with a non-Falasha, helping at a burial and touching the corpse or the grave, touching a dead animal—all these are such occasions and carry with them varying periods of segregation from the community. When a priest has sexual intercourse with his wife, both he and his wife are segregated for one day. Whoever performs a circumcision must also remain outside the village for one day. On their return, all these offenders must wash their clothes and bodies before entering the village.

Circumcision is usually performed by a woman. On the day of the ceremony, which takes place the eighth day after the birth, the priest blesses the unleavened bread which has been brought as an offering by the father and the elders cut it into slices and give it to the children, who pass the day singing and dancing. As is customary throughout Ethiopia, the Falasha girl-child also undergoes a ritual operation comparable to circumcision.

WHEN a Falasha girl reaches ten years and a Falasha boy seventeen years, they are permitted to enter into marriage. As a preliminary, the parents of the boy send a relative as intermediary to the prospective bride's house. If the girl's father agrees to the proposed match, the intermediary presents him with a *thaler*, which formally seals the agreement. Then the two fathers meet and fix the day of the wedding. The usual betrothal period can last for two or three years.

On the evening of the day on which the prospective bride is brought to the home of her future husband, all the relatives and friends are invited to a feast. The priests beat the drums, chant prayers,* and, to symbolize the marriage bond, wrap a colored thread around the forehead of the

*Several religious songs executed by the priests will be available shortly on records issued by Ethnic Folkways Library of New York City.

bridegroom. Then the husband and the best man return with the future bride to her house and sleep there. On the next day, at midday, the best man and two relatives of the bride carry her to her husband's house. If the girl has retained her virginity until the bridal night, the assembled people bless her and announce the joyful news to her parents; but if she has lost it, the husband can break the marriage vow, removing the thread from his forehead to betoken his decision. He then takes his discovery to the high priest and his intended wife is immediately excluded from the Falasha community and can never marry a Falasha.

When a man is near death he calls for the priest and some of the elders, and writes or dictates his will. He then confesses his sins (a Christian practice which has become integrated into Falasha Judaism), giving his confessor a goat or a sheep. When he is dead, four men come to the dead man's house and wash his body. These, and all those who touch the corpse during the burial, are rendered impure for a period of seven days and must live outside the village. They perform the usual ritual before returning to it.

If a man dies in the morning he is buried on the same day if there is still time; if not, he is buried the very next day. Anyone can dig the grave, whether a Falasha, a Christian, or a Moslem, but only the appointed four men can lower the corpse into the grave and cover it with earth. After the burial service, the burial attendants repair to the dead man's house and eat peas and drink coffee. If the man was wealthy, his family slaughters a bull or a sheep and invites friends and relatives to a feast. On this day, too, the priests offer special prayers in the synagogue.

The Falasha custom of confession is not only practiced at the time of death but throughout a Falasha's lifetime. Each Falasha has a confessor among the priesthood. Unless his own confessor has died or moved to another place, he cannot change him. The sinner must give his confessor a goat, sheep, or money as a token of his remorse, and the confessor then shares this with the

other priests. Prayers are said by the priests to have the man's sins remitted.

THE Falashas, though having much the same food as the Ethiopians, observe the prescriptions of the Bible with great strictness and eat only those animals that chew the cud and are cloven-hoofed. They are also scrupulous about washing their hands before and after every meal (as is the case with the other Ethiopians) and pronouncing the benediction over all their food. The Falashas do not eat raw meat or animals that have died natural deaths, and observe a very detailed set of taboos against the invasion of such practices.

Although the cultural standards of the Falashas are quite high as concerns hygienic matters, personal relations, handicraft arts, and so on, their general educational level is still very low. Only a very small number know Hebrew, and these are chiefly persons who had the opportunity to study in Europe and the few graduates of the now defunct Falasha school in Addis Ababa. Yet the Falashas are very eager for more education. They could send their children to the government school at Gondar, but since this would involve grave breaches of their religious code, they have not availed themselves of this. Instead, they have established schools in the villages. Unfortunately, these are quite primitive; the teachers are rarely paid for their services and in many villages no separate school building exists.

Despite the increased knowledge of the Falashas and their problems on the part of Western Jewry, they still live in relative isolation. Even many Ethiopians, especially those in regions where there are no Falashas, are not aware of their existence. In general, the Ethiopians think of them as a group apart, using the Ethiopic word *attenkugn*, which means "do not touch me," to describe them.

Even in Gondar, the biggest town in the Falasha-populated region, news of Western Jewish life seldom penetrates. Few foreign newspapers ever reach there, and if they did, only a handful of Falashas could read

them. Nevertheless, the Falashas feel themselves to be part of the international Jewish community. They have, however, no conception of Jewish nationalism and, because religious persecution does not exist in Ethiopia, there seems little chance of such ideas taking root. In their prayers the memory of Palestine is alive and meaningful, but it has a religious and not a national meaning.

During the reign of Emperor Theodore (1855-68), a number of Falashas did make an attempt to journey to Palestine. A religious dispute, which arose between the Falashas and the Protestant missionaries (or between the Falashas and their converts to Protestantism), led them to fear a mass conversion. To escape this, they left their communities and began the long trip to Jerusalem. They left precipitately, unprepared for a long journey, naively expecting, like the ancient Jews, to have their progress attended by miracles. After much trouble they managed to reach the region of Tigre, where most of them perished of disease and lack of food; the few who survived returned to desolate villages.

By and large, however, the Falashas have lived through the modern period quite peacefully (the Ethiopian war of 1936-37 did not affect them too extensively). At the present time one can only guess at the total number of Falashas. If one includes both the compact and separate communities in the regions of Begemder, Semyen, and Tigre, and the scattering of individuals in the larger towns, it is probable that they do not exceed fifteen to twenty thousand.

ALMOST every investigator of Falasha life has had a different explanation of their origin. None of these theories has yet been proved substantial enough to withstand critical appraisal. James Bruce, in his travels in search of the source of the Nile, unearthed the traditional legend that the Falashas originally came from Jerusalem as part of the retinue of Menelik, the son of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. Joseph Halévy,

the French Semitist, believed that the Falashas were Judaizing Himyarites taken prisoner in Ethiopia by King Caleb; after escaping from captivity, these Himyarites fled to the mountains and converted a group of Agaus, the aborigines of Ethiopia, and the present Falasha type was produced out of this intermingling of racial strains. Jacques Faitlovitch, on the other hand, considers the facial characteristics of the Falashas, their light black skin and finely shaped features, proof of a non-African origin. He contends that they were probably Jewish immigrants from Upper Egypt, descendants of Jews who had returned to Egypt after the first exile.

Rabbi Henry A. Stern, who visited Ethiopia in the 80's, came forth with a truly Victorian hypothesis. "The most probable conjecture," he says, "is, that at a very early period—perhaps when Solomon's fleet navigated the Red Sea—some adventurous Jews, impelled by love of gain, settled among the pleasant hills of Arabia Felix; whilst others of a more daring and enterprising spirit were induced to try their fortunes in the more remote, though not less salubrious, mountain regions of Ethiopia."

It is believed that the Hebraic religion could enter West Africa in ancient times by only two possible routes; from the North, across the desert; or from the East, on the trade route which had been beaten along the fringe of the great tropical jungles. My own inclination is to agree with the many authorities who assert that the Falashas were originally Ethiopians and that they were converted to Judaism; that the most reasonable explanation is that either the Jews of Egypt—a Jewish group lives in Elephantine—or the Jews of Arabia converted them. And, owing to the fact that more historical proof can be found for the existence of contacts between southern Arabia and Ethiopia than between Egypt and Ethiopia, it is more likely that Judaism came to Ethiopia from southern Arabia.

HEINRICH HEINE: FLIGHT AND RETURN

The Fallacy of Being Only a Human Being

MARTIN GREENBERG

*Suis-je Juif? Suis-je un homme?
Je suis Juif. Je suis un homme.*

—Bernard Lazare

IN THE 2nd century BCE, after the world triumph of Hellenic culture under Alexander the Great, we come upon Jews in Jerusalem who, in addition to Hellenizing their names, underwent a painful operation to efface the marks of their circumcision. The crudity of this denial of their Jewishness strikes us today as barbarous; the importance of the gymnasium in Hellenic social life and a culture no doubt less “internal” than our own account for it. In the modern age this operation has been spiritualized, without rendering it any less painful. . . .

Heinrich Heine, one of the first of the type of the modern Jewish intellectual, wrestled with the fact of his Jewishness his whole life through. In a recent edition of the *Confessio Judaica** this struggle is plainly seen. *Jüdisches Manifest* is a collection of all the recorded remarks that Heine made on the Jews and things Jewish, whether in prose, poetry, letters, or conversation. It has

In the May issue of COMMENTARY, Jean-Paul Sartre drew a “Portrait of the Inauthentic Jew.” Perhaps the most famous and successful of all “inauthentic Jews”—at least for a while—was Heinrich Heine, who denied his Judaism in the interests of a “universal humanity.” But from his case it would seem that “inauthenticity,” if deeply enough felt and intensely enough lived, may even result in a re-assertion of “authenticity.” Such, at least, is one of the implications of MARTIN GREENBERG’s article on Heine presented here. Mr. Greenberg wrote “The Common Man of the Nazis” in the December 1946 issue of COMMENTARY. He was born in 1918 in Norfolk, Virginia, and was graduated from the University of Michigan in 1938.

been put together on what would appear a rather barbarous principle: in every instance where Heine referred to the Jews, the reference was simply excerpted from its context (except in the case of the poetry and *The Rabbi of Bacherach*) and so printed. But the result is not nearly so bad as one would expect—much of Heine’s prose reduces itself to a running series of *mots* that do not suffer too great damage out of context; and, more important, the number of remarks made by Heine on the Jews is so formidable (three hundred closely printed pages) that, once assembled, they create their own context.

Yet in an essential way this book does violence to Heine and Heine’s life. Despite the editor’s restrained preface, its final effect, simply by assembling the material between two covers, is to “claim” him for the Jews. Heine was a Jew. But we are not permitted to “claim” him as one, if for no other reason than that he himself forbade it. True child of the 19th century that he was, and Jew that he was, he felt that to profess himself a Jew was to limit the universality of his humanity. In a conversation reported by Alfred Meissner, Heine said that he had this in common with all artists, that he wrote not for the “enthusiastic moment but for the centuries, not for a country but for the world, not for a tribe but for humanity. It would be wanting in taste on my part and petty if, as they say about me, I had ever been ashamed of being a Jew, but it would be equally ridiculous if I professed to be one.” Heine was among the first to see how illusory this “humanity” was that he

* Heinrich Heine, *Jüdisches Manifest*. Eine Auswahl aus seinen Werken, Briefen und Gesprächen, Herausgegeben von Hugo Bieber. Mary S. Rosenberg, New York, 1946.

vaunted in common with his century. Yet he, like us today, though disillusioned, could never quite abandon it. Moreover, and in this his statement is perfectly justified, for him to have been a Jew in any sense that would permit us, as Jews, to "claim" him, would have meant an intolerable limitation, not indeed of his metaphysical "humanity," but of his energy, his art, his life. It would have meant an intolerable surrender to the narrowness and timidity of the middle-class Jewish existence that was the actuality about him in Western Europe in the first half of the 19th century. Citizen of the world—as he was—and *Freiheitskämpfer*, or the German Jewish middle class; there was hardly any other alternative.

HEINE was obsessed by his Jewishness—the size of this book makes that plain. Though "obsessed" is perhaps the wrong word, since it implies a crippling effect and Heine's Jewishness did not, as it did in the case of so many others, cripple him. On the contrary, it was a perpetual spur to his wit (he was the wittiest man of his century), to his poetry (very few modern Jews have been able to make great poetry out of their situation as Jews in a non-Jewish world; Heine did it by means of irony, as later on Kafka, when the situation worsened, did it by means of pathos), to his criticism of society (he was one of the most clear-headed, unsentimental, and redoubtable of the radical political writers of the 19th century).

Throughout his life Heine in general experienced his Jewishness as a burden, a limitation, and a hindrance. I don't think we can fully appreciate in this country how much of a burden his Jewishness must have been to him, how much of a burden Jewishness is—whether he chooses to shoulder it or not—to any Western European Jew. European society and European culture are feudal and aristocratic in origin, however much the middle class later contributed to them. The Jew, excluded until recently from this culture, had been since earliest times its living antithesis. The chief symbols of a thousand years of European society: knight, warrior,

troubadour, courtier, landed nobleman, cultivated aristocrat—who better than the Jew was their anti-symbol? When a Jew asserted a claim to this culture, he did so *in spite of* the existing traditions. The democratic revolution did not change this situation—it simply helped the Jew in asserting this claim. Even when the Jew's effort to assimilate this culture was crowned with every success, his Jewishness remained at best either something that he steadfastly ignored (a kind of silent lament), or an embarrassingly irrelevant, somewhat ridiculous, and tormentingly inelegant intrusion on the otherwise fashionable décor of his life. In America, however, where there is no feudal or aristocratic past, it is precisely the most deep-seated traditions of the country that assure the Jew his right to participate in society. It is the *denial* of this participation that flies in the face of existing traditions.

A serious anti-Semitic politics in this country would have to be one that dissented with the historical basis of American society, whereas in Europe it is able to invoke (although modern anti-Semitism has rarely contented itself with that only) some of the oldest traditions of the Continent in its support. For the most part, therefore, among sensitive American Jews their individual Jewishness is not a problem (or a self-reproach) everlastingly to be contended with, but is simply part of the given. (There are of course many other factors involved here. With Kafka too, who represents the last stage in the development of the European Jew, Jewishness loses its particular problematic poignancy. With Kafka *everything* has become problematic, and this no doubt figures very importantly in the explanation of the sensitive American Jew's attitude toward his Jewishness.)

But for Heine it was a problem that he never ceased to contend with, a given that he sought to evade by one means or another throughout his entire life. In 1825, about the age of twenty-seven, a few months after having been baptized, he wrote to Moses Moser: "I assure you, if the law had permitted the theft of silver spoons, I would

not have been baptized." And then of course there is his famous *mot*, magnificent in the flatness of its statement, and so thunderingly wrong: "The baptismal certificate is the ticket of admission to European culture." Baptism was a direct attempt to evade the disability of his Jewishness. It failed miserably, as Heine himself said, and perpetually thereafter prompted him to make shame-faced witticisms at his own expense. (Someone asked him how he was. "Ach, how am I?" he groaned. "All *meshumodim* [converts] should feel the way I do.")

But the reason for his baptism's lack of success was not its failure to buy him his way into European culture. European *culture* was no problem, as Solomon Maimon had shown half a century before, coming out of the ghetto on the dead run to hurdle it in one brilliant leap, uncouth manners, Yiddish accent, and all. Heine soon enough possessed himself of ("stole") that silver spoon. *The problem was not European culture but European society.*

THERE, of course, there was no place for him, not until every element of the old regime had been purged away and a universal Europe had come into existence. He devoted a good part of his life to that end, and yet the goal of a universal Europe was so defined that he had continually to deny himself as a Jew. In a letter to Moses Moser in 1823, he had written: "That I shall be a partisan of the rights of the Jews and their civil equality, this I confess, and in troubled times that will unfailingly arrive the German mob will hear my voice echo in the beer parlors and palaces. Yet the born foe of all positive religions shall never stand forth as champion of the religion that first introduced that ill-tempered moralistic censoriousness (*Menschenmäkelei*) which now causes us so much pain."

It was not enough, however, to disavow the Jewish religion. He had to disavow the social character of the Jew. The conversion of this "born foe of all positive religions" had been a negative, cowardly, and unsatisfactory flight from his Jewishness into a

Christianity of which he was, if anything, even more critical. But Heine was seeking, like so many Jews after him, to escape the Jewish condition not by negatively fleeing it but by positively transcending it. Thus, in his role as a radical critic of society, he so defined the social essence of the Jew (at the same time that he loudly defended his "human" essence) as to include in the category "Jew" all members of the trading middle class, whether Jew or Christian. A "Jew" is the embodiment of the "*Schachergeist*," and "Judaism" can count among its followers, in addition to the "unbaptized Jews," those "whom I call—to distinguish them from the circumcised—baptized Jews, in common speech also known as Christians." (This is that same "Jew" from which the young Marx, in his pamphlet on the Jewish question, wished to "emancipate" the world.) In this way Heine, a radical democrat and critic of the bourgeoisie, divested himself of his Jewishness not in spite of but through his radical opinions.

Later on he made a second division of mankind, into "Hellenes" and "Nazarenes," by which he was able to throw off the name of Jew again. "Nazarenes" (or "Jews") were the ascetic men of the spirit, hostile to this world, to pleasure and to art, while "Hellenes" were the life-loving celebrators of those very things. "Thus there have been Hellenes in the families of German ministers, and Jews who were born in Athens and were probably descended from Theseus." And in the ranks of the Hellenes, Heine counted himself as the "great Pagan Number 2" (Goethe was Number 1).

But above and beyond these more or less explicit evasions, Heine resorted to what Sartre calls the "escape into the universal." This, says Sartre, for the inauthentic Jew, is the "royal road of flight" from "*la situation de juif*." It is best, I think, to explain this historically, although Sartre doesn't do so. The Jews entered the modern world of the intellect riding on the back of the ideas of the Enlightenment; they entered modern political society on the back of the French Revolution, which was an imperfect reali-

zation of these ideas. The Enlightenment believed in the sovereignty of reason in every sphere of human life, in the existence of universal laws accessible to this reason, in a universal religion and a universal humanity. History was a progressive realization of these universals, in the course of which every particularity of time, place, religion, and race would be sloughed off, leaving exposed an abstract, unqualified, and perfect Man in the center of a Universal Just Society. When Napoleon visited Düsseldorf in Heine's thirteenth year, the editor of *Jüdisches Manifest* recounts in a wonderful anecdote, Rabbi Judah Löb Abraham Scheuer, elected spokesman for the Düsseldorfer clergy, welcomed him as the "new Cyrus." And Napoleon replied: "Before God all men are brothers. They shall love and assist one another regardless of their religious differences."

TO JEWS in Heine's position (but by no means to all Jews) such a pronouncement must have been a trumpet calling them out of centuries of oppression. The catch, however, in Napoleon's statement is the "regardless." It is not Jews and Christians who are brothers, *men* are brothers, *regardless*—in spite of—the fact that they are Jews and Christians. Given the relation of forces that actually obtained, there was never the slightest doubt as to who would have to do the "disregarding."

The "escape into the universal" is this continual "disregarding" of one's Jewishness in favor of one's "humanity." As Sartre says, this type of inauthentic Jew "realizes on a higher plane that accord and that assimilation which are denied him on the social plane." For a brief period of the 18th century, perhaps, it was possible to live happily—really happily—on that "higher plane," as Solomon Maimon had done, entirely and honestly indifferent to what existed outside the world of ideas. But this real indifference soon turned "inauthentic," and that modern type of abstract and abstracted Jew of the pure intellect was born, so wonderful in some ways, so pathetic in others. Then, too,

secular Jews began to look forward to a millennial future that would resolve the differences between the universal and the social planes and so finally bring about a universal accord. Marx, the greatest critic of modern society, can probably be convicted of the "escape into the universal," and yet, despite Sartre, by evading what degree of Jewishness he had and concentrating on rather than disregarding the differences between the plane of the universal and the plane of the social, by ruthlessly confronting middle-class society with the disparity between its universalist pretensions and its limited reality, he threw himself into an even more "extreme" situation than he had evaded, lived to the very "limits" of this situation, and thus achieved an even greater "authenticity." Perhaps among revolutionists alone, and there only occasionally, was it possible not simply to evade one's Jewishness but really to transcend it. To characterize a man like Trotsky, for instance, as an "inauthentic Jew" may have a certain amount of impersonal truth, indeed, but seems woefully wanting in any sense as a measure of the man, or even as a description of him *qua* Jew.

Of course, Heine's Jewishness was a much larger factor in his life than Marx's. With him there was no question of resolving elsewhere in a more authentic existence his inauthenticity as a Jew. Heine was to achieve his authenticity in another way.

Early in his life already, in the midst of the most sneering and contradictory references to the Jews, a note of defiance appears in Heine's attitude to the non-Jewish world—a somewhat childish note. This is wonderfully illustrated in the poem "Donna Clara," where the "daughter of the Alcides," Donna Clara, plainly an anti-Semite of the modern type, is wooed in the castle garden by an unknown knight, who with his soft kisses stills her violent and incessant ejaculations against the Jews. When the trumpets' peal summons her back to the castle, and she begs his name from him, he answers:

I, Señora, your beloved,

*Am the son of that renowned,
Great and highly learned Rabbi,
Israel of Saragossa.*

In the "Hebrew Melodies" Heine advises his wife to forget theaters and concerts for a while and fill in the blank spaces in her French education by learning Hebrew. In that way she will be able to read Judah ha-Levi, Solomon Ibn Gabirol, and Moses Ibn Ezra, "the triple star" of the "golden age of the Arabic-Old Hispanic school of Jewish poets."

Near the end of his life, in the "Confessions," this attitude of defiance and Jewish pride reaches an explicit culmination: "I see now that the Greeks were only pretty youths, while the Jews were always men, powerful, unyielding men, not only in the past but to the present day, in spite of eighteen centuries of persecution and misery. I have since learned to prize them better, and if pride of birth were not a foolish contradiction in a champion of the revolution and its democratic principles, the writer of these pages could be proud that his ancestors belonged to the noble House of Israel, that he is a descendant of those martyrs who gave the world a God and a morality, and who fought and suffered on all the battlefields of thought."

Now this sort of thing is a contradiction, not indeed of any democratic principles (it is almost sad that Heine, in the face of the accumulated insolence of the degenerate aristocracy of Europe and their hangers-on, who sneered at him as an upstart Jew, should have felt that his "democratic principles" forbade his taking pride in his Jewish birth), but of the universal ideas that he professed. How could he take pride in the accidental and contingent quality of Jew when the essence Man shone forth from him with such splendor?

Far more important than this growing Jewish pride, however, was an increasing suspicion of the future very inconsistent in an enthusiast of the coming triumph of the Universal Man. In 1823, at the

age of twenty-five, Heine had already remarked with startling prescience: "Although I am a Radical in England and a Carbonari in Italy, nevertheless I am no Demagogue in Germany for the entirely accidental and trifling reason that with the triumph of the latter several thousand Jewish heads, and precisely the best ones, would fall." Much later, in the "Confessions," he observed that "what today they call the hatred of the proletariat for the rich, used to be called hatred of the Jews"—a remark whose force today, after one hundred years of the sentimentalization of the proletariat, is even greater than it was at the time he made it.

Heine was apparently gradually possessed by an intuition of disaster. It sprang from his apprehensions as to the future course of German history, but in the end it shook most of his former opinions to their foundation. This intuition attained its clearest expression in an amazingly prophetic passage of the essay, "On the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany." He has just remarked that the Germans, a methodical nation, had to work out their philosophy first and their revolution afterward. There will be Kantians, Fichteans, and "philosophers of nature" forthcoming in this revolution whose ruthlessness will "fill the world with terror and amazement." "For if the Kantian's hand strikes heavily and without hesitation because his heart is stirred by no traditional respect, if the Fichtean boldly defies every danger because it has no real existence for him, then the philosopher of nature will be terrible because he can join hands with the primeval forces of nature, because he can call up the demoniac energies of Old Germanic pantheism, and because then there will awaken in him that battle ardor which we find among the ancient Germans, which fights neither to kill nor to conquer, but simply to fight. Christianity has—and that is its fairest merit—somewhat mitigated the brutal German lust for battle. But it could not destroy it. When once that taming talisman, the Cross, is broken, the savagery of the old battlers will flare up again, the insane berserk rage

sung so much by the Northern bards. That talisman is rotten. The day will come when it will pitifully collapse. Then the old stone gods will rise from the forgotten rubble and rub the dust of a thousand years from their eyes, and Thor with his giant hammer will leap up and begin smashing Gothic cathedrals. . . ."

As a Jew and an exile from Germany, Heine had a vantage ground from which to look into the future. If his vision was not broad and profound, it was at least piercing. If he did not quite know how to reconcile what he saw with the otherwise optimistic ideas that he shared with his generation, adding one more contradiction to the mass of contradictions of which he was constituted, what he saw was at least enough effectually to separate him from the dominant tendencies of his time. Heine was one of those few men of the 19th century who were able to see past the bright abstractions to the dark side of their age.

HAVING broken with his age in this, he was obliged—although much time had to elapse—to break with it in other ways. In the Epilogue to the *Romanzero*, after having already endured several of the bed-ridden years of semi-paralysis that were to put him in his grave, Heine announced his return to a belief in a personal God: "Yes, like the prodigal son, I have come back to God after a long time spent in feeding the swine among the Hegelians." This did not mean that the "born foe of all positive religions," the old soldier in the "war for the liberation of humanity," had made his peace with the respectable powers of the world. "No, my religious views and convictions have remained free of any trace of churchiness—no ringing of bells has led me on, no altar candles have dazzled me." Heine returned to no fold, neither the Lutheran nor the Jewish. On the other hand, it was not an act as meaningless as his baptism, as many of his admirers apparently want to think. His premonitions of doom sent the arrogant structure of enlightened Hegelianism tumbling. Thus left exposed to the chill winds of the

void, he modestly crept in where many before him had crept. In the Preface to the second edition of "On the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany," that same essay in which he had years before prophesied a future for Europe wholly at variance with the views of his "enlightened friends," Heine had this to say: "Ach! Several years later a bodily and spiritual alteration took place in me. How often since then I have pondered the story of that Babylonian king who considered himself the Almighty God, but who miserably fell from the heights of his conceit and like an animal crawled on the ground and ate grass (it was probably lettuce). This story stands in that great and splendid Book of Daniel, and I recommend it for the edification it affords not only to my good friend Ruge, but also to my much more stubborn friend Marx, yes, to Messrs. Feuerbach, Daumer, Bruno Bauer, Hengstenberg, and however else the others may be called, these godless self-constituted gods."

Heine's return to a belief in God is without any significance for the future course of his age, or our own age, and I do not dwell on it at length for that reason. God "died" in the 19th century and Heine was not the man to revive him. What it means for the understanding of Heine as a Jew, however, is of great significance. It meant the collapse of that "universal" into which he had escaped. It meant an end to the possibility of taking refuge from his Jewishness in an abstract and ultimate "Humanity." It meant—however reluctant he was to part with it—openly facing the world as a Jew without the screen of ideas behind which for a century most of the Jews of the West had hidden. It meant acknowledging himself as Jew, laying claim to the name of Jew—"authenticity," to use Sartre's term. "I am no longer a god-like biped; I am no longer the 'first German after Goethe,' as Ruge called me in healthier days; I am no longer the great Pagan Number 2, whom people likened to vine-wreathed Dionysus, while the title of a grand-ducal, Weimarian Jupiter was bestowed upon my colleague Number 1; I

am no longer the pleasure-loving, somewhat embonpointed Hellene who smiled down on melancholy Nazarenes—I am now only a poor, sick Jew, a wasted picture of misery, an unhappy man!”

THE quality of Jew is an ambiguous one, and there are doubtless many ways to realize it greatly. Heine fled from his Jewishness like a plague only to find it pervasively confronting him at the end of his life. He gave up the struggle at last, wearily and reluctantly yielding to it, and in that consists his greatness as a Jew. There are other ways, I repeat, to achieve greatness as a Jew. Heine's, no doubt, is one of the humbler ways. But great it is nevertheless. It is the very violence of his efforts to deny himself that makes his ultimate affirmation so moving. Heine arrived at his authenticity precisely by first traversing every path of inauthenticity.

Heine's example is one, I think, that reveals how purely formal and analytic Sartre's categories are, how little they obtain in “existence” itself. Heine was not, nor is there any Jew—or any person—entirely authentic or inauthentic. You are not confronted with a clear-cut choice between the two, as Sartre would seem to argue. Indeed, your choice is made before you realize it, often by someone else, and you live, perhaps, to regret it later. You are inauthentic, in this world, before you are aware of the possibility of being otherwise. (And yet you cannot deny your own inauthentic past, for that is a type of inauthenticity too. There are Jews who change

their names from Siegfried to Yitzhak, and who, in thus attempting to deny themselves, such as they were, are as inauthentic in the second instance as they were in the first.) Officially, the modern world considers you of the Jewish “persuasion.” A free agent, you have been “persuaded” to be a Jew, and are free, as part of your Rights of Man, to be “unpersuaded,” as was Heine for a time. This is the lie with which you begin to live. Here, of course, Sartre is correct. You cannot choose not to be a Jew, you can only choose to be an authentic or inauthentic Jew. But in the same breath Sartre is wrong. You cannot choose to be authentic or inauthentic; Jew or Gentile, you can only choose not to be inauthentic any longer. And in that lies Heine's greatness as a Jew.

The argument I have pursued is of course more abstract and neat than what it is meant to describe. The living Heine, as he is revealed in his writings, is too ambiguous and wonderful a creature for any criticism to hope to do him justice. But the argument has to be so abstracted if there is to be one. Heine's authenticity, achieved late and with difficulty, was no perfect state of Jewish bliss. It was something constantly to be striven for, and, once attained, something to which he could never quite reconcile himself. Heine sighed on his deathbed for those enthusiastic illusions of which he had so reluctantly disabused himself. “‘I have come back to Jehovah!’ he said a few days before his death, and the friend from whom we had this, also a witty and celebrated writer, added: ‘It was one of his regrets.’”

THE REBIRTH OF THE ITALIAN PEOPLE

Peasant and City Man Join in a New Democracy

CARLO LEVI

ITALIAN life has that ambiguity peculiar to things alive and beautiful. We know that great works of art have at the same time two, or several, or an infinite number of meanings; are not capable of being confined in a single scheme, of being understood in one way alone, of being explained by a single irrefutable idea. It was no accident that Dante Alighieri maintained—in his medieval terminology—that the *Divine Comedy* was to be read and interpreted in five different ways: literal, anagogical, symbolic, allegoric, and theological.

But what is more ambiguous and complex than history? The richer in life and history a person or a nation is, the more prominent and constant is this quality of ambiguity.

In an extraordinary way Italian life lends itself to being viewed from different and conflicting points. He who pauses at only one of them gets a vision that is partial and

false, even if it enables him to observe real facts and analyze them sharply. Only a constant awareness of the manifold nature of things Italian permits us to have a real and complete vision of them.

ITALIAN historiography has always had historians who related the history of some single idea as it was embodied in certain phenomena of Italian life: be it the idea of freedom or independence, or the idea of monarchy or that of papacy, or the idea of the universality of Rome—and so on. But very seldom have we had truly vivid histories that took account of the double nature of Italy and of Italian phenomena, almost every one of which is surely and compulsively paradoxical.

Italy, as it happens, has, since ancient times, been both the producer of the most universal ideas—the idea of empire and the idea of universal Catholicism—and, at the same time, the affirmer of the most individualized and local communal liberties. Italy happened, also, to be the first country that founded a bank and modern financial relationships—and to have remained, at the same time, one of the most backward countries from the economic point of view. Italy happened to be the richest country in discoverers and navigators and the country most open to world-wide expansion by migration—and to be, at the same time, one of the countries poorest in colonies and most densely populated. Italy had and still has one of the richest, deepest, and most brilliant cultures in the world—and, at the same time, one of the highest rates of illiteracy of all civilized countries. Italy was and still is rightly considered the garden of Europe, a land naturally blessed by God, where oranges blossom and one harvest follows closely on

CARLO LEVI's *Christ Stopped at Eboli*, published in Italy in 1945 and in the United States in 1947, was greeted as a great document of the humanistic temper and as the finest portrait of Italian peasant life since Silone's *Fontamara*. Here, Mr. Levi analyzes a moment in Italian history when the barrier between city and village crumbled, and a new spirit of liberty walked through the land, a spirit which may still survive amid all the complexities of Italy's postwar politics, and which may be one source of the high morale and will toward reconstruction that many observers have reported in Italy today. Carlo Levi was born in Turin in 1902 and received his medical degree in 1924; but he gave up his medical practice in favor of painting, and later writing. In 1931 he helped found the anti-Fascist "Justice and Liberty" movement. For his anti-Fascist views he was exiled to an isolated mountain village, and this experience is recorded in *Christ Stopped at Eboli*. This article was translated from the Italian by Fausta Monari.

the other, where grain grows rich and exuberant in the silvery shade of olive trees—yet Italy is nevertheless one of the poorest of all countries from an agricultural point of view, her earth being rugged and of little productivity and her climate very often disastrous to crops. Italy was and still is the seat of Christianity, the core of the Catholic faith—and, at the same time, one of the least fundamentally religious countries in the whole of Europe.

Italy was and is still considered one of the countries where nationalism and imperialism are most deeply rooted, and she happens to have acted, quite recently, in a way that would seem to prove the truth of this—and yet she is at the same time one of the least nationalistic and most universally human countries known in the world. Italy happened and still happens to be considered one of the countries least fit (owing to her historical vicissitudes) to feel deeply the values of freedom—and yet it is equally true that the real mainspring of Italian life is the principle of liberty, and that not only have the greatest Italian writers advocated, and often been martyrs of freedom, but also that the daily life of the Italian people is extremely rich in a feeling for liberty, without which feeling they cannot be understood. If we look at the history of my country in recent times we can see how it has been guided by two principles that appear absolutely opposed. On the one hand there is a very strong sense of individualism: this varied country, this constantly different succession of cities, villages, and regions, each with a history of its own, lodges a breed of men deeply concerned with the significance of personality, men who are very prolific in human values as they pertain to the individual. These human values make of each person almost a world apart, a self-sufficient world, full of peculiar devices, almost capable of living alone, full of inner riches, ready to give rather than to receive, but in any case sufficient to itself. But, on the other hand, under the historical events of these last decades is hidden an impulse of a totalitarian character, a gregarious sense, a

sense of individual insufficiency, a need to cancel out one's own personality in a more indeterminate and general entity, a tendency to shift to the state one's personal responsibilities, a tendency to accept the state as a superior and extraneous institution to which one can entrust once and for all, as to a father, the guidance of one's life.

THE struggle of these contradicting tendencies in recent Italian history is reflected in a constant conflict in the consciousness of every Italian citizen. Those who like to picture history in popular or religious terms could almost say that here is represented the eternal war between Good and Evil, angels and fiends, a continuing tragedy which can end only with Hell or Eternal Redemption.

This, however, would be too simple, too bare, and too dramatic a scheme. It is possible that these two opposite tendencies have a common source which explains and justifies them both, a common source which permitted them both to be true and alive in a world made corporeal and ambiguous by reality—a world that is not falsely simple and single in its meaning, that is not a realm of opposing schemes, empty and tragical antitheses, futile and totalitarian political struggles. These two opposite tendencies can both be valid in the real world, but not in that one which, like an intellectual tumor, fills the minds of slaves and fanatics and of millions of men in so many countries of the world, who, having lost the password of life, have lost its reason too.

In these last years Italy has experienced the same extraordinary events that shook the rest of the world. But while these events have constituted either a tragic isolated adventure or the beginning of something new and without precedent in countries less rich in history and with less sediment deposited by previous ages, here in Italy they have revived very ancient problems and sentiments and have found an extremely sensitive sounding board. Perhaps a quick analysis of these events that did this may bring us nearer to the solution of the problem we have set ourselves.

Between traditional Italian individualism and the traditionalism of the Italian state, the Fascist regime inserted itself like an interruption—and as an attempt, moreover, at a contradictory solution. For a country that had democratic institutions seemingly identical with those of other European states but whose unity was too recent and not yet consolidated, for a country in which excessive social and economic disparities made vain the illusion of modern democracy—for such a country the bloody effort of World War I was too heavy a test. The test was passed as regards the common effort made by the people—as regards their capacity to support the weight of a long and arduous war while submitting to severe discipline and enduring every kind of privation and loss. But the test was too stern insofar as it brought to many classes that had until then lived on the margins of national life a sudden consciousness of their own rights and insofar as the ruling classes were unable to find a solution to the needs of these classes. The postwar age saw vital forces burst forth that had until then been kept repressed, forces that strove towards a collective and statist ideal for which the country was not yet ripe. The first form of Fascism raised up against those forces, to protect what were in effect the most reactionary principles of our ancient Italian civilization, hoisted the old flag of Italian individualism but dyed for this occasion with the color of Nietzsche's and d'Annunzio's superman and with the rhetoric of the hero and warrior.

From this rather anarchic starting point the transition to tyranny was very swift and quite natural. Tyranny, using very modern methods, pointed to the very opposite pole of the individualism from which it had sprung; nourished by the gregarious spirit of Italy, a kind of totalitarianism such as had never been experienced before in history was created, a totalitarianism that tried to assert state control over every act, every thought, and even over the inmost conscience.

HOWEVER, there was in Fascism, among many other things, an attempt, actually,

to solve the contemporary crisis, the crisis of the relations between individual and state, in a country in which these two terms were traditionally unconnected and without possibility of mediation—in a country where there had been neither a religious reformation nor a liberal revolution and where there was, therefore, little possibility of real modern democracy.

Fascism was a spurious rebellion against a spurious democracy. From the beginning it was opposed by a kind of anti-Fascism that, in spite of its noble motives, was not really so far removed from what it fought against, being a kind of internal contradiction to Fascism rather than something that truly surpassed it.

Fascism seemed an anti-historical attempt to solve the problem of the relations between individual and state by denying both and replacing them both with an idolatrous and totalitarian state; anti-Fascism knew of nothing better to do than to keep on opposing to Fascism one or the other of the two terms of the problem: either the individual, or the state, as conceived in their traditional, pre-Fascist forms. But under this entirely futile struggle—though often heroic and stained with the blood of martyrs and the suffering of prisoners and exiles—something was ripened by events that was different and that really transcended both Fascism and its opposition, something that very few were aware of, but which was lived by a large section of the Italian people and was later on to constitute a deeply creative experience, becoming the substance and reason of a real revolution and a real revival of our country.

It was a very slow process of preparation that completely detached the souls of Italians both from the new pseudo-theories of Fascism—the corporate state, living space, empire, racialism—and from the old and glorious flags of liberalism and socialism and traditional communism. At times this process of detachment may have seemed a matter of apathy or utter resignation, a despairing withdrawal into oneself and a refusal of all contact with the public life of the nation. But in reality it was the silent ripening of a

new political conscience which had eventually to reveal itself in an unmistakable way.

The rebirth of the Italian people came with the war, with the Resistance, during which the whole people rose up, no longer following the old parties and their ways, no longer setting up programs of restoration, no longer clinging to worn-out schemes, but following instead their own natural impulse toward autonomy. Everywhere, without any connection with a central government (the cities being cut off from one another), the natural organs of the Resistance arose by their own independent means. Committees of Liberation arose that were in reality the small provisional governments of small and temporary states. In each of these "states" very ancient and forgotten virtues, differing from each other according to place, character, and historical traditions, were re-awakened. These recovered virtues threw regional characters and regional traditions into strong relief, but they were all alike in one thing: in being the integral parts of a collective effort made on an autonomous and individual basis.

THUS, in a way that appears almost miraculous, the two fundamental motifs of Italian history, individualism and collectivism, found a meeting point. This meeting point was not derived from either political theories or intellectual ideals, but was felt rather as a moral necessity and a great promise of hope. In this great event the two traditions of Fascism and anti-Fascism both perished.

They were soon reborn, however—the moment the last shot was fired at the backs of the fleeing Germans in the Po Valley. They were reborn out of the strength that lies in dead things which clutter the ground and are hard to remove. They were reborn out of the measures taken by the occupying powers, who did not take the new state of affairs into account and, following preconceived schemes and acting in the interest of a balance of power, overestimated what was dead. They were reborn out of the

pressure of the international situation, which has been created by the clash of great powers, and of great ideologies that have nothing in common with the recent Italian experience.

The old parties sprang up again in Italy. A political situation was soon created that, because of the ascendancy of traditional anti-Fascism, led quickly to the reconstitution of a pre-Fascist state which greatly resembled the one Fascism had overthrown. The struggle between the sectarian powers of the Right and Left, between Clericalism and Communism, was from the beginning a struggle against the new spirit of the Resistance, which had tried spontaneously to find new political forms and refused to be dominated by sectarianism and the spirit of factionalism. Clericalism and Communism joined hands from the beginning in reconstructing a pre-Fascist state that was democratic only in appearance. Then, satisfied that they had won their struggle against a real revival of the Italian people, Clericalism and Communism fell out between themselves.

But underneath this crust of political factionalism, underneath the new constitution and the wrangling of parties, underneath the intrigues of the two contending blocs, underneath all this, the Italian people's great experience of renewal has not been lost. Even though it cannot assert itself explicitly in political institutions or make itself felt in the guidance of the state, this experience reveals itself in the true life of the country, in its effort at reconstruction, in its speedy rehabilitation, in its immediate negation of the war, in all the teeming activity that makes Italy today seem the freest, most active, most creative, and best balanced country in Europe.

ACTING in governments formed by coalitions of the traditional forces of Right and Left, Socialist ministers have introduced a policy of free enterprise and liberal ministers have tried to apply the measures of a planned economy. But amid all the inefficiency and confusion that resulted from this,

the vital forces of Italy went ahead to tackle reconstruction on their own account, with the energy of a healthy body healing a wound. In the absence of genuinely strong governments there was at least the advantage of having weak ones. The non-intervention of a central state, one of the distinctive features of the Resistance, persisted afterwards in the reconstruction of the country.

Visitors who have been to other European countries are agreeably surprised to see how rapidly houses, roads, and bridges are being rebuilt in Italy, which is among the poorest of all countries in raw materials and capital and one of those most devastated by the war. Trains are running again, and on new rails, the old ones having been removed in toto by the Germans; factories are working; fields are being scientifically tilled and made fertile; shops are stocked with every kind of goods, which are well made; and cheerful people throng the streets. All this, of course, has not fallen from heaven as a gift or miracle; all this spells labor, sweat, sacrifice, and pain.

Many people in Italy are still hard up for their daily bread; there are many homeless families and individuals whose life is an unending struggle against misery. And there is a great waste of energy because of the absence of any definite plan for coping with want.

But the struggle to survive is generally being fought with energy and virile hope, and sometimes with an ingenuity that is not always completely lawful or honest, for it is also applied to bartering and black-market operations. But all this is but as a shadow cast over a picture otherwise characterized by a stubborn will to life, by a general consciousness of one's own capacity to get along in the world, and of one's own capacity to assert one's personality in a period when personal assertion has become the right of all, and thus a kind of collective ideal.

Even in this field, the unheroic and sometimes anti-heroic field of economic life, there is something akin to and originating with the spirit that animated the Resistance.

WHAT else was this spirit but the realization in facts of a deep and original sense of democracy? Not a formal or schematic democracy, or even a purely political or technical one, but such a democracy as includes all human values and all human functions and conditions. In this spirit of direct and autonomistic democracy (which can find illustrious precedents in Italian history, and has had an underground continuity that has only been hidden but never interrupted), all the traditional antinomies, all the paradoxes of Italian life, could for a moment find a joint solution that suited both individual will and collective impulse.

This surge toward spontaneous unity was so strong during the Resistance that it acted indeed as a solution to countless personal problems as well as to vital social and political questions. This surge was so radical and so violent that nobody thought his own life too great a price to pay. Many who died at that time perhaps did not know why, but still they died with serene consciences and fully at peace with themselves. A Luciano Bolis cut his own throat when in jail in Genoa, for fear of being forced to speak under torture; and thousands of anonymous peasants abandoned their houses without a lament to fire and destruction by the German SS.

It might seem irreverent to put next to these illustrious or obscure heroes of the Resistance period those other peasants (or perhaps the same ones) who after the peace drove their ploughs in fields still uncleared of mines, those workers who rebuilt demolished workshops, those engineers who restored factories to working order, those manufacturers and businessmen who opened up new avenues for trade, those men and women who shook off the black soot of war and returned with new vigor to the daily vicissitudes of personal family life, and of their callings; and those finally, who made shift with uncertain work in an uncertain world in order to live, those who, after having risked imprisonment or death by hiding goods from the Fascists, subsequently continued their semi-illegal but not useless

traffic at a time when regular trade had not yet been sufficiently restored.

To mention these people may seem irreverent but it is not, because the noble and creative aspects of the teeming activity that followed the war—together with those aspects that were less praiseworthy or even illicit as far as traditional morality is concerned—were, and still are, the expression of a common impulse to assert the value of the free human being, the human being freed from chains and tyrannic limits and from the tyranny of custom itself.

It is possible that this impulse will fade, once the country has returned to normal conditions of life, and once the flood waters recede within their old banks—it is then possible that everything will return little by little to normal and that this great experience will pass away without lasting results. I, however, believe, on the contrary, that these results will remain, that this experience will not be ephemeral and that it is not destined to vanish like a meteor that flashes across the summer sky.

THE deep and hidden motive that persists beneath all the contradictions of Italian life is, in my opinion, the following. Two different and almost unconnected civilizations have existed from time immemorial in Italy, living side by side on the same soil, sometimes hostile, sometimes indifferent to each other: the civilization of the peasants, which has remained intact and immovable throughout the centuries, and another civilization, which can today be called that of the bourgeois or citizen, a changing modern civilization shaped by the course of history.

Peculiar to the culture of the peasants is its lack of a sense of the state as a central organization; its lack of a sense of religion as theocracy, of a sense of the nation as involved in conquests and wars, its lack of a sense of time as history. This culture has a direct contact with things and with their magical powers, and a sense of man as an integral part of the world. What is peculiar to the other civilization is, precisely, the state, the army, the church, and the nation.

The presence of those two antithetical civilizations or cultures is the reason why the myths of modern civilization—namely our official state forms and formalities—have always met with a silent opposition in Italy and have been fundamentally difficult to realize in practice; though on the other hand, the spirit of peasant anarchy has never been strong enough to triumph and has always been suppressed and bound down by a state whose own spirit was foreign to the peasants. This basic antithesis and misunderstanding has rendered the forms of politics empty in Italy and the needs of her people voiceless. This is the key to the understanding of the infinite paradoxes of Italian life: it should be the task of historians to analyze and explain them one by one from this point of view.

THE extreme importance of the Resistance period is due to this fact: that perhaps for the first time in Italian history the two cultures that have constituted it came spontaneously close to one another, driven by the same force. The peasant—who is traditionally distrustful, impervious, anonymous, and accustomed to meeting all kinds of invaders, both foreign and native, with equal measures of fear, repulsion, and contempt—this time made his choice, and made it naturally. The doors of peasant homes, usually shut to all but animals and poverty, were opened to partisans who came from the city. Wine, grain, animals, the hard-earned savings of laborious lifetimes were given for that thing which suddenly seemed, by intuition, the common cause. One fought neither for one's native country nor for that traditional enemy, the state of Rome; but for another country, for another state—one that would be much closer and much more sensitive—for a country and a state for all men; for autonomy. The workers, students, and middle-class people who came hastily armed from the cities to join the peasants in the villages and woods did not feel differently.

For the first time the two cultures touched and recognized one another; both were looking for the same thing, different for both

from what they already knew. This movement, although it cannot be made clear in words and concepts, and although it has a tendency to hide itself like a subterranean stream, has not stopped. The peasants are still in movement. One cannot say for certain towards what goal they are moving, but they are like a very slow and heavy machine that cannot easily stop once it is in motion.

It is certainly regrettable that the resurrection of the old formulas of Italian political life should conceal and obstruct this movement and threaten to divert it from its aim. Clericalism and Communism are both ready to exploit this movement by offering it false ends and by channeling it back into antiquated, alien, and ruinous forms of state organization. Thus our spontaneous autonomous and popular Italian democracy now runs the risk of being transformed into a clerical tyranny or a "progressive democracy"—one of those democracies that, like mass-production corsets, fit so badly on the bodies of so many European countries. There is the risk, namely, of substituting, for the fertile, vital, and poetic ambiguity of this happy period, in which the two different Italian civilizations have fused into one single and yet twofold impulse, the barren contradictions involved in the abstract problems of tyranny and oppression, of the individual and the state.

A FEW days ago I went into one of the cave dwellings of Matera, the troglodyte city that I described in my novel *Christ Stopped at Eboli*. The door, the only opening of the cave, overlooked a path that passed over the roof of the cave below. Inside, in a dark den tunneled into the rock, stood a large double-bed, a few stools, and a chest of drawers with a mirror; in the back, tied to a ring attached to the wall, was a donkey chewing its fodder. It was a holiday and the whole peasant family was at home; there were women, young men, and children, all sitting around an old man. He was a personage of eighty-three years old, tall, dressed in black, wearing a black cloak, a black hat, and he had a long, white, shaggy moustache. The old man spoke to me of Noah's flood. He was a seer and expressed himself in verses and parables. "The Flood will soon come," he told me. "It has already begun inside me. All the saints are fiends."

"All the saints are fiends," I repeated to myself as I left him and began climbing back up the hill. I decided that this would be the title of my new book—this synthetic epigraph of ambiguity. I had perhaps never listened to a phrase that expressed better than did the mysterious one of the old peasant, the paradox of Italian life: that paradox which is spontaneously resolved by deeds once the two civilizations come together.

ANTI-SEMITIC STEREOTYPES IN ZIONISM

The Nationalist Rejection of Diaspora Jewry

YEHEZKEL KAUFMAN

IT IS customary to define the word "anti-Semitism" as "hatred of Jews," but this definition is not accurate. Anti-Semitism is not Jew-hatred as such. It is the rationalizations men develop who are hostile to the Jew, to justify their hostility. Anti-Semitism is, thus, not the emotion, but the ideas revolving around it, in some cases even developing into a kind of "scientific system." Anti-Semitism is related to provocation: it uses false charges and distortions of fact, and employs a whole structure of slander directed against Jewish religion, Jewish morality, the Jewish way of life, and the attitudes Jews exhibit toward their Gentile environment.

The chief techniques of anti-Semitism are: (1) *fabrication*—accusing the Jews of faults they never had; (2) *generalization*—referring the faults of individuals to the group as a whole; (3) *singling out*—selecting faults to

THE influence of 19th-century anti-Semitic concepts is more complex than is often realized—and, crowning irony of all, according to the Palestinian author of this penetrating article, they seem even to have found their way into the ideology of that Jewish movement which above all tried to reaffirm the strength and soundness of Jews and Jewish character. This study by YEHEZKEL KAUFMAN on anti-Semitic strands in traditional Zionist thought originally appeared, in a somewhat different form, in *Be-Havle Ha-Zeman*, Tel Aviv 1936. Dr. Kaufman has achieved distinction as a sociologist, philosopher, student of religion, and theoretician of Jewish nationalism. His most noted work is the four-volume *Golah Venehar*, an analysis of the causes of Jewish survival since the dispersion. He is at present working on a *History of the Jewish Religion*, seven books of which have already been published in Hebrew. Dr. Kaufman was born in the Ukraine in 1899 and went to Palestine in 1929; he now lives in Haifa. This article was translated from the Hebrew by Jacob Sloan.

which Jews are not particularly subject, and blowing them up into "Jewish faults"; (4) *harshness*—regarding things as faults in the case of Jews which are not considered faults in others. And since anti-Semitism is a system of beliefs, it may survive independently of hatred, so that there are Gentiles who are ideological anti-Semites, and have no hate for the particular Jews with whom they have dealings.

Anti-Semitism can also penetrate the beliefs of good Jews. In this case, its conclusion is: "And so you must change, Jews, and become like everybody else." This Jewish anti-Semitism coincides with the most vicious brand of anti-Semitism in that it sees Jewish misfortune as flowing directly from the Jew's own nasty characteristics and actions. It is the Jews' fault—that is the reasoning common to both. And along with the assumption of Jewish culpability, Jewish anti-Semitism adopts the other anti-Semitic tactics: the fabrication of charges, the singling out of "Jewish" faults, the denial to Jews of the right to behave like other people.

WE HAVE been suffering from this disease of Jewish anti-Semitism ever since the period of the Enlightenment. And we should recognize the disease for what it is, even when it puts on the disguise of Jewish nationalism. Indeed, the poison that flows from Jewish nationalist sources is perhaps the most dangerous of all.

The cardinal sin of the Enlightenment was that it concurred in the "case for the prosecution" and demanded that the Jews do penance as a means of conciliating the Gentile world. Typically, Judah Loeb Gordon describes the "enlightened man" who is Jewish as being superior to his fellow Jews in that he "admits to the truth": i.e., he accepts as

facts most of the complaints and accusations of the Jew-haters. As early as Mendelssohn's time the Enlightenment drew the conclusion that the Jews must "make themselves over." The Jews, it was said, despite their superior knowledge, are cheats, moneylenders, exploiters, separatists, hate the Gentiles, etc., etc. They have to "make themselves over" to deserve civil rights.

*Aye it is true, O Jacob, you have ever been
silly,
You have held on to folly, you have loathed
wisdom—
The bread of your house has been crooked
dealings and usury,
Justified the insults, and the curse of your
foes.*

This is Gordon's version of "the truth" (in his *Derech Bat Ami*).

To deserve the "compassion of king and lords," the Jews must devote their lives to knowledge, must stop being "like Balaam's ass," and speak "the clear language of every nation." Or, in the words of Smolenskin, they are to be like all the other nations, "to seek and attain knowledge, to abandon the way of the rogue and the fool."

The "enlightened" governments made the gift of rights conditional on Enlightenment: the Jews were to lose their undesirable traits, assimilate linguistically, take off their "filthy clothing." And the "enlightened" Jews conceded the justice of these conditions. They did not demand equality under any circumstances, but "admitted" that the Jews must first become "like unto all the nations," thus implying that they were *worse* than other nations. True, the intelligentsia defended their brethren and argued that persecution and discriminatory decrees had been the cause of their degradation. But they conceded the degradation; and, worse, conceded that this justified the denial of rights.

Their arguments ran something like this: There are no Jewish artisans or laborers; Jews are all merchants, storekeepers; and moneylenders; we live by "crooked deals and usury." How could a nation like ours hope

to be on equal terms with the others? (The non-Jews, of course, aren't merchants or moneylenders or exploiters or oppressors; they all live off the fruits of their own labor!) We believe in "vanities" (meaning we believe in Hasidic *zaddikim*, and so forth), wear "filthy clothing" (meaning we have a special dress), speak a confused language (meaning a language of our own, Yiddish). (The non-Jews, of course, are all enthusiasts of the Enlightenment and of rational concepts; they all dress properly, speak "clearly.") So, O Jew, "be a man out of doors, a Jew at home" (J. L. Gordon). That is how our "enlightened" admitted to the "truth."

THIS native variant of anti-Semitism struck deep roots in the soil of Judaism. The assimilationist Judaism of both the West and the East became completely infected. Remarkable phenomenon of spiritual decay! What a distance from Börne and Heine, those proud converts, to Weininger, or even to Rathenau! It gave rise to a deep feeling of inferiority, self-hatred, terror at the "call of the blood," a mad race to escape that horrible Jewish shadow from which there is no refuge, to hide, even in suicide—all caused by the anti-Semitic "truth" that assimilatory Judaism accepted. Theodor Lessing, in his book *Jewish Self-Hatred*, erected a terrible memorial to many such hate-ridden souls.

Yet more bitter to recall is the fact that even the Jewish *national* movement was not safe from the anti-Semitic poison. It, too, accepted the anti-Semitic "truth," and it still attempts to base Jewish redemption on an anti-Semitic foundation. Herzl seemed to recognize this when he wrote: "The Jews, too, faithfully say 'Amen' to the anti-Semitic slogan that we earn our living off the 'feeder' nations, and that were it not for them, we should be forced to starve to death. This is another evidence of the decline of our self-respect under the onslaught of false accusations" (*The Jewish State*, Introduction). And later he says: "No people has had so many misconceptions published about it as have the Jews, and we are so depressed, so weakened by our history of suffering, that we ourselves

repeat the lies of our calumniators, actually believing them as completely as they do."

But Herzl's denunciation did not help. On the contrary, Zionist ideology itself was by no means free from the influence of anti-Semitism, and Zionism actually based the national movement on a rationale of charges that it took over from the anti-Semites, and attempted to find a core of justice in the hatred of the Jews. Jews of the Galut, the countries of dispersion, really deserve to be hated: their customs, tendencies, businesses, attitude to their environment, etc., are the source of the hatred, the justifiable hatred. Therefore, they must leave the Galut.

These nationalists failed to realize that it was not the Galut they were making obnoxious, but the Jewish people itself. The nationalist movement has identified itself with a severe criticism of life in the Galut. But criticism is of two kinds: there is devoted nationalist criticism, like Bialik's, which overpowers and stirs us, and there is distorted abuse that depresses us. One can recognize the latter by its *style*, which is unrestrainedly abusive in referring to the Jews of the Diaspora, which is to say, all Jews from the day of the Exile to the present. The vocabulary of abuse in Hebrew literature—where Jews speak to one another without fear of exaggeration—is of a sort you will find only in anti-Semitic literature of the worst type.*

THE cornerstone of anti-Semitic nationalism is the premise that Jewish life in the Diaspora is "immoral." Jewish nationalism ceaselessly emphasizes this premise, formulated in a thousand ways, and bases the idea of Zionist redemption on it. In what sense is life in the Galut "immoral"? The

answer is: in two senses—the national and the social.

First of all, the very fact of living on a foreign soil, outside a national homeland, in the midst of foreign nations, in the field of influence of a foreign culture, is "slavery, degradation, uncleanness, a dog's life," etc.

Now, the emigration of human beings from their native lands and their dispersal in foreign countries is a general phenomenon that has been going on from antiquity to the present day. This emigration has been responsible for the disappearance of many nations and the submergence of thousands of their nationals in other nations. There is no people that does not have its Galut to this very day. But none of all those exiles who live abroad in foreign nations are slaves or dogs—none, that is, but the Jews. The Italians, the Irish, the Germans, and all the other nationalities in the American "melting pot," the Germans in Russia and in other countries, the Chinese, the Japanese, who leave their native lands and try to strike roots in a foreign country—none of these is living an "immoral life" when he settles on foreign soil, in a foreign culture, not even when he completely assimilates—none but the Jew. Other nationalities are permitted to exist as "national minorities" and struggle for national minority rights. But if the Jews try to do the same, there's talk of nothing but filth, decadence, slavery, and so on.

During the period of the Enlightenment the Jews were blamed for being hostile to culture, for detesting "knowledge," for separatism. In the following period, the Jews were seized with a great passion for knowledge. The young people flooded the Gentile schools. They were impelled by a drive to put an end to "separatism," to attach themselves to a foreign culture and live and be creative in it. Then the anti-Semites reversed themselves and discovered new Jewish faults: the Jew had fallen in love with *their* knowledge; he had stopped "isolating himself," and had jumped head over heels into a foreign culture which he was spoiling!

The Jewish intelligentsia took this charge also (as they had taken the earlier, opposite

* Frishman: "Jewish life is a 'dog's life' that evokes disgust." Berdichevski: "Not a nation, not a people, not human." Brenner: "Gypsies, filthy dogs, inhuman, wounded dogs." A. D. Gordon: "Parasitism, people fundamentally useless." From the articles of Shwadron: "Slaves, helots, the basest uncleanness, worms, filth, parasitic rootlessness" (see his writings in *Moznaim*, 1933, Nos. 33-38). In honor of the anniversary of Histadrut, *Davar*, the Palestinian newspaper, printed in vowel-pointed headlines: "National renaissance, the regeneration of a parasitic nation."

accusation of Jewish "separatism") straight from the anti-Semites, and accepted it, and this time again the nationalists concurred. "Yes, it is true; the Jews are at fault; they deserve the hatred of the Gentiles—because they are assimilating. Why, you can see yourself that the Gentiles hate an assimilating Jew more than one who stands four-square with his nation and its culture." They forgot the Gentile's attitude to the ghetto Jews; they forgot the hatred of Jews in Russia, for example, where the Jewish masses were far from assimilating—they forgot everything. The nationalists accepted the anti-Semitic fiction without demurrer, so long as it helped make assimilation appear obnoxious.

LIFE in the Diaspora is immoral from a social point of view as well—so went the nationalist indictment. The Diaspora Jew engages in "disgusting occupations" like store-keeping and jobbing. He looks for soft berths, hates work, lives like a parasite.

What is the basis of this accusation? An antiquated "physiocratic" approach to the middleman and banking that no intelligent adult believes nowadays. And, of course, it is "correct" *only* in relation to the Jews. The Gentiles may be middlemen and bankers without any quotas, but if the Jews engage in those occupations, they are parasites—so runs the reasoning of the anti-Semite. A "store" is clear evidence of the Jewish marginal existence in Shnipitzok, Kasrilevke, etc. (everyone knows there are no stores at all in London, Paris, Peking, Tokyo). The Jew is guilty and immoral because he tries to enter the liberal professions, and hopes to make a living from his education. (Obviously, among Gentiles there is no migration from the country to the city, where the soft occupations are located, and, of course, there are no rich bourgeoisie, no aristocracy.)

And what about the heart of the premise that the Jew won't work with his hands? Modern "scientific" anti-Semitism began in Western Europe (particularly in Germany) where the Jews had been forcibly removed from the artisan and labor markets as early

as the Middle Ages. For that reason Western anti-Semitism was able to formulate a broad generalization to the effect that Jews prefer to stand "behind their shutters" or lend money on interest, and run away from hard work—therefore, all Jews are contemptible. Anti-Semitism pretends that the supposed fact that the Jew is not a working man is the *real reason for its hatred*. One might ask: Why was the Jew hated when he *was* a working man, and why was every effort made to remove him from the labor market? And is it really true that the Jew isn't a working man? Weren't there millions of Jewish laborers and craftsmen in Eastern Europe and in Asia? Weren't there whole trades that were almost entirely in the hands of Jews? Why were they persecuted there? There are no answers to these questions, yet the "generalization" does not seem to be affected.

Nationalistic anti-Semitism thoughtlessly accepts this physiocratic generalization and repeats it as gospel truth, reminding us of it early and late. What is the Jew in the Galut? "A storekeeper and a middleman." Why is he hated? "Because he isn't a worker, because he is a parasite." Is this hatred justified? "Yes, because his life is contemptible."

THESE falsehoods infect all our Hebrew literature and the mind of our youth. If you were to open the notebook of a Hebrew school student, you might read such phrases as these: "The Jews in the Diaspora are living unhealthy lives, as unsavory tradesmen, and sometimes have unsavory private lives too. . . . They are corrupt. . . . The Gentiles around them are living healthy lives." Or: "The Jews in the Galut prefer storekeeping, banking, and peddling," and that is why the Gentiles hate them; "the lack of Jewish farmers and Jewish workers has been the reason for their unnatural lives, and has aroused hatred."

In the course of the fourth conference of the Histadrut (January 1933), one of the leaders of the workers delivered a message something like this from the platform:

"What is self-preparation? . . . First of all, preparation for Gentile jobs, the self-preparation of the Jewish worker to become a Gentile . . . to do Gentile work . . . to make a profit the way Gentiles do. . . . The Jewish village girl shall live like a Gentile country lass, etc., etc."—The purpose of self-preparation is not only to turn the Jewish storekeeper into a worker but—into a Gentile!

For decades the notion was rooted in the mentality of the German Jews that hatred of the Jews had its source in the "social structure" peculiar to Judaism. Not "parasitism" merely, but a completely new version: it was a faulty "social structure," an unnatural stratification, which was the legitimate source of hatred.

After the Emancipation, Jews were drawn to the liberal occupations, and became doctors and lawyers in large numbers. Anti-Semitism uttered its charge: the social structure of the Jews was detrimental to the native economy. The Jewish nationalists hurried to include this in their philosophy, too. "The social structure," they said, "is the source of all evil." Even Herzl believed that the Emancipation had failed because the Jews had become a "middle class" in the ghetto. But Herzl made that remark in passing, while the German Zionists developed this basically anti-Semitic point of view into a complete law.

"Our social structure," they argued ceaselessly, "is the source of our misfortunes. Our trouble is due to our abnormal 'stratification'; we have far too many merchants and professionals in proportion to our workers and farmers." Zionism adopted this analysis, and took as its goal the effecting of a change in the Jewish social structure.

It is true that the ideals of Zionism will not be realized without some change of this kind in the social structure of our people. But that's another and different story. The question we are dealing with at this point is whether it is possible to accept the singular social structure of Western Judaism in our time as the real *reason* or even the *justification* for anti-Semitism, as the foes of the Jews contend it is. The facts are clear

enough: the hatred is far older than this social structure, and clearly does not flow from it. Besides, Jewish life in Eastern Europe proved that the Jewish social structure is not the cause of anti-Semitism. Furthermore, those who hate the Jews most are for the larger part members of the same class. What reason can there be to believe that, if the Jews had a larger proportion of farmers and workers, *those* classes would not dislike them? Herzl aptly emphasizes (in contradiction to his statement quoted above) that the very areas where Jews were attempting to settle on the soil and become farmers immediately became nests of Jew-hatred. The attitude towards Jewish workers in Hitler Germany shows how little genuine truth there is in this Law of Social Structure. From every point of view, the physiocratic law has only a superficial and artificial connection with genuine Zionism. But German Zionists uncritically accepted it under the influence of anti-Semitism.

THE Jewish nationalist bill of complaint against the Jewish people also contains an original charge, not borrowed from the arsenal of foreign anti-Semitism. The complaint is that the Jews have neglected their own movement for redemption, Zionism. Now, this complaint may be basically correct. But—the tone sets the music. The man who disregards the special quality of the Zionist demand for redemption, the man who states the problem in terms that seem to indicate that the redemptive effort is not succeeding because we are "Yids" who prefer to remain peddlers like our forefathers—that man, though he be a Jew, is nothing less than an anti-Semite.

Our nationalist accusers find our ancestors guilty because they went into exile to trade and become peddlers and the like, and we are at fault for not having broken with their pattern. The Zionists are particularly to blame for not having got out of the Galut and taken the rest of the nation along with them. Our ancestors had a slave mentality, for "even before the destruction of the Temple, the masses voluntarily left Pales-

tine." Why? To find themselves "fleshpots" abroad! And the Zionists are particularly culpable. "We are helots, slaves of our own free will," if "in the course of fifty years the renaissance movement has not instilled in the Jewish will a drive to redemption and a homeland."

As a matter of fact, there are many nations whose nationals have left and leave their homeland "of their own free will" (that is to say, for economic reasons, or because of persecution by a foreign power) and many nations that have suffered the humiliation of slavery for decades and even centuries. I doubt that any Irish nationalist ever upbraided his nation in such style for deserting Ireland en masse and going after the "fleshpots" in America. I doubt that any Polish patriot ever defamed his nation because the masses accepted foreign rule and took no part in the Polish rebellion for independence. I doubt that the fighters for Indian liberation ever insulted their nation for bowing to foreign domination, and even contributing Indians to the police and army, weapons of their own suppression.

Another parallel: for decades, the European proletariat prepared to wage war on the enslaving, exploiting class. They created powerful institutions and great organizations that exerted much influence on political life in Europe. But what happened eventually? With the expansion of European capitalism, the proletariat appeared to be deserting the idealistic vision of emancipation and to prefer the "fleshpots," or perhaps just plain onions and garlic. During World War I, the proletariat forgot its fraternal internationalism and fought alongside its class enemies on the national battlefronts. After the war, there was still no sign of a "will to auto-emancipation." Quite the contrary! The proletarian seemed to be interested in defending the capitalist system!

Yet I believe I am not mistaken when I state that no socialist has been so bold as to scold the European *proletariat* for being "dogs, slaves, worms. . ." The fight against "opportunism" has been directed entirely at the *leaders*, from the time of Eduard Bern-

stein to the present. The leaders are the ones who are found guilty of treason, hypocrisy, luxury-hunting, and so forth; no one has had the audacity to blame the class as a whole. Even the Communists, a tribe adept at mud-slinging, don't have the nerve to charge the proletariat with treason, slave mentality, etc.; they, too, blame the leaders for the failure of the proletariat.

But that's not the way it is with us Jews. Why, you can see for yourself! These people couldn't even accomplish so small a thing as the emancipation of a nation scattered abroad and divided among various economies all over the world; they couldn't even move a nation of sixteen millions into a tiny country, every foot of whose soil is purchased with endless toil and tremendous suffering! When all the other nations are forced to leave their homelands (for only the Jews leave "of their own free will") they return immediately, not being servile or cowardly. They do not stay away from their "fatherlands" a moment longer than they have to. It is only the Jews—never the other nations!—who would not give up storekeeping and peddling and become farmers and hired hands.

It is a sad opinion one hears many people expressing—that anti-Semitism is in a certain sense an anteroom to Zionism. Many Zionists, and not only Western European Zionists, believe with complete naivety that to be "good Zionists," we must first become "good" anti-Semites, we must first hate ourselves.

The true movement for Jewish redemption does not rest on such foundations. Only a superficial point of view could link Zionism to the rationale of anti-Semitism. The movement for redemption has no need to arouse hatred for the Galut by these means. On the contrary, it shows, or, more correctly, it ought to show, the extent of the falseness of these charges, and how they change in every period—in order to draw the correct conclusions: that it is not this or that situation which is the true source of the infectious hatred, but Galut; not the Jews in Galut, nor their characteristics, nor their occupations—

but Galut itself. Redemption rests on the negation of anti-Semitism no less than on the negation of Galut.

What is Galut? Galut is not a special "social structure," or an oversupply of doctors or lawyers, or a passion for storekeeping, or separatism, or assimilation—but the state of the *eternal alien* into which the Jewish people have declined as a result of definite historical factors (which I have attempted to describe elsewhere), and for which no one is to blame. It makes no difference what the occupations and social conditions of Jews may be. It makes no difference what their attitude toward foreign cultures may be. They will be disliked whether they are doctors or farmers, merchants or workers, or whether they are all of them put together. They will be disliked whether they speak a "jargon" or a "pure" language, disliked not because they are worse than any other nation, or because they are an "inferior race," or because they are moneylenders, or because they are parasites, or because their lives are "immoral," or because the Gentiles are wicked and Jew-haters by nature—but solely because the Jewish nation is an eternal alien.

Therefore there is no solution in a change of the "social structure," in altering areas of employment, and so forth. There is only one solution—escape from alienation. Not by assimilation, but by a national effort—that is the primary commandment of our era.

Only a comprehension of the true nature of the Galut—its tragic nature—can serve as the foundation of the movement for redemption. Not the tragedy referred to in those hyperbolic sermons about "the great human tragedy of the people, fighting in the name of the ideal of justice," but tragedy in the essential meaning of the word: the conjunction of historical factors that have burdened the Jewish people with a cruel and unique fate, so that every vital manifestation, not

bad in and of itself, has invariably been transformed into an evil. Emigration, dispersal, ghetto, assimilation, a longing for social amelioration, commerce, higher education—all these are not special to the Jews, and are not generally considered evils. It was only the conjunction of special factors in the existence of the Jewish nation that transformed these phenomena into a great and terrible evil—Galut; the Jews were blamed for their history.

There is no place in the idea of national redemption for "love" of anti-Semitism. Zionism sees anti-Semitism, too, from a tragic point of view; even anti-Semitism is not "guilty." The end of anti-Semitism will come only with the end of Galut; but Zionism can never accept the claims of the anti-Semite. The Zionist ideal is not the redemption of slaves sunk in mud and filth, living "immoral lives" and hated for that reason by the Gentiles who earn their living by the toil of their hands. It is not the idea of worthless men who have been forced, by a need to find solace for their damned souls, to live "immoral lives" like the Gentiles. That is not the ideal of redemption.

Zionism is the idea of a nation attempting to escape the burden of a cruel fate laid upon it by the causal factors of its history. It is not redemption from *moral sin*, but from *tragic accident*. It is not a progression from the filth of worms to the height of man, but an heroic effort the like of which has never been seen before. Will this nation have the strength to carry through a redemptive effort unparalleled in history? Let us continue to have faith, and hope. But faith will not issue from contempt, and hope will not spring from insult. We must give our youth the pride of pioneers, not the depression of a people burdened with a sense of their sin and victims of a feeling of guilt. Pride is the only true nourishment for redemption.

BEHIND BEVIN'S HOSTILITY TO ISRAEL

Britain is Not Yet Reconciled to the Realities

GEORGE LICHTHEIM

LONDON

“WHAT now confronts us is the task of readjusting our Middle Eastern policy to the new realities. It is not possible just to recognize Israel and for the rest, go on as before. With the establishment of this new state there now exists in the Middle East a community possessing all the modern techniques of production. It cannot fail to have some influence on the affairs of the whole area. We have been accustomed to regarding Jews and Arabs as competitors for a little plot of land, with ourselves as the arbitrators. It would have been more far-sighted to see Jews and British as competitors for the role of chief agent of the industrial revolution in the Middle East. Only if this competition can be turned into cooperation is there a prospect of long-term stability in that vital region. To bring about such cooperation demands more than a change of policy in the Cabinet. It demands a fundamental change of approach by all concerned.”

These remarkable words were not uttered in the recent stormy House of Commons debate on Palestine. They appeared in a brief and inconspicuous editorial note pub-

BRITAIN'S recognition of Israel formally marked an important stage in the strained relations between the ex-mandatory and the ex-mandate: but did it indicate a real change in these relations or in the bewildering attitudes of their chief architect, Foreign Secretary Bevin? GEORGE LICHTHEIM here examines the development of British-Israeli relations as they have been recently exposed on the public stage of Parliament and in the forums of the influential daily and periodical press, where British policy in Palestine is now undergoing searching examination and analysis. Mr. Lichtheim is London correspondent for a number of Israeli publications. His most recent article in COMMENTARY was “Europe's Democracy and ‘American Imperialism,’” in the January issue.

lished by the liberal Sunday newspaper, the *Observer*, on January 23, a week after this important journal had delivered a double-barrelled blast against the “evil and foolish policy” pursued by the Foreign Secretary. Everyone read and remarked upon this unusual double-column editorial, which climaxed the press campaign against Mr. Bevin. Few paid attention to the constructive suggestion contained in the lines quoted. Certainly the Foreign Secretary was not among those who did. His now notorious opening speech in the debate of January 26—and still more the remarks he dropped in the semi-privacy of a Labor party parliamentary meeting earlier on the same day—convinced his hearers that any such “fundamental change of approach” will not occur while he is in control of the Foreign Office and while other key departments are held by colleagues or subordinates who disagree with him only in matters of detail.

The formal recognition of Israel has made little change. A graceless gesture, extracted from the government at the pistol point of parliamentary rebellion and commonwealth pressure, its moral value was dissipated in advance by the attitude displayed by Mr. Bevin on the last occasion when, in Mr. Crossman's phrase, he might have “won back everything with the last penny.”

British *de facto* recognition was to have been flourished as a bargaining counter during the negotiations over Israel's frontiers—until the very last moment, in fact. Instead, the combined pressure of the United States, the Commonwealths of Australia and New Zealand, France, the Conservative opposition, and the critics in his own party compelled Mr. Bevin to surrender his trump card “without extracting . . . any guarantee that the matters outstanding will be dealt

with in the way most likely to ensure a lasting settlement," to cite the characteristic lament of the *Economist* (January 29). All Bevin has to show for his obstinacy is a slight temporary abatement of anti-British abuse in the Egyptian press, and the grudging toleration of the Pakistanis: a meager catch after so much expenditure on fish-bait.

IT WAS the recognition that British policy had failed to reap any of the promised benefits in the way of Arab good will that finally turned the Tories against Mr. Bevin. Their behavior during the dramatic House of Commons debate on January 26 mirrored both their attachment to the aims he has for so long pursued and their angry disappointment at his failure and the resulting damage to British prestige. In his brilliant closing speech, Mr. Oliver Stanley, the most accomplished debater on the Opposition side, converted their bitterness over the humiliation suffered by the Royal Air Force in the Sinai "incident," and their resentment against the United States and the UN for refusing to take the British side, into anger against the government and the Foreign Secretary. Carefully refraining from any remark calculated to embitter the pro-Arabs on the benches behind him, he concentrated on the government's responsibility for the long list of defeats and humiliations suffered by Britain in the Middle East since Mr. Bevin took over the Foreign Office. In a speech of only thirty-five minutes he cemented the unity of the ranks behind him and made the whole House feel that the Foreign Secretary was personally and uniquely responsible for the disaster that had befallen the country. But for this brilliant extempore performance, the Conservatives, many of whom had smarted under Winston Churchill's frank pro-Zionist speech earlier in the evening, would never have walked as a body into the "No" lobby.

Churchill's speech, one of his most devastating, was that of a lifelong Liberal temporarily at the head of the Tory party. He blasted not only Bevin's methods but his purpose—and was cheered by the Socialist

backbenchers as often as by his own followers. If Stanley solidified the Conservatives, Churchill helped to split the Labor ranks. Later in the debate, Kenneth Pickthorn, an independent Conservative, Member for Cambridge University and a veteran anti-Zionist, contributed his share to the Foreign Secretary's political decline by bluntly denouncing him as incompetent, incoherent, and generally unfit to hold his post, although "an almost infinitely better man than the one most canvassed as his possible successor." This remark caused some Socialists to comment that the shadow of Dalton was over the debate. And so it was.

But despite their lingering affection for the Foreign Secretary and their apprehension of worse to come if he were forced to resign, the Conservatives were left with no choice. Some of them might fear—as some of the Labor "rebels" certainly hoped—that if the government fell it would be succeeded by another Socialist administration under Morrison or Cripps, further to the Left and less likely to take the advice of the permanent officials. Others might dislike Churchill's pro-Zionism almost as much as the Labor left-wing resented Bevin's sullen hostility to Israel. But whatever their misgivings, they served notice on the Foreign Secretary that he no longer had their confidence.

Despite Attlee's charge of pre-electoral maneuvering, they were in fact obeying their principles rather than their interests. Anxious though many of them were to rid themselves of the carcass of dead policies, they could not have been unaware that in attacking Bevin on Palestine they were taking the unpopular side in terms of election politics. For not only is Bevin personally popular with almost every section of the electorate, but his Palestine policy was and is more popular with the ordinary voter than almost anything he has done elsewhere. More than that: because of Palestine, Bevin is strongest with precisely that section of the electorate which normally votes Conservative. It can be argued that this is just why the Tories have finally taken alarm and are beginning to attack him, lest his popularity

cost them the next election. But in the voting on January 26 they were simply reacting as representatives of the traditional governing class, goaded at long last beyond endurance by the spectacle of so much obstinacy and folly. (Some of the pro-Arab "young brigadiers" who served in the Middle East took the opportunity to maneuver themselves into the correct position, without dropping their anti-Zionist bias, by blaming the Foreign Secretary for the disaster that has befallen the Palestine Arabs).

The Tory semi-liberal big business wing, of which Churchill—despite a deceptive air of romantic die-hardism in his speeches and writings—is at bottom more representative than other Tory leaders, had had enough of Bevin's failure to win American support for his Palestine policy and disliked his constant sniping at Truman—another demagogic device that helps this pseudo-Palmerston with the electorate but induces alarm and irritation among the upper-middle class and is especially infuriating to the small but influential Liberal party, with its ramifications outside Parliament and its control of some of the most important daily and weekly journals in this country.

Lastly, the Labor left-wing revolted with something more than its expected strength. The result was a moral defeat that very nearly became a real one and kept the whips in a panic all evening until the vote was counted; after which everyone commented on Chamberlain and the Norway debate that brought him down.

YET in an important sense nothing has changed, nor is there any likelihood that anything will. The reason, as the *New Statesman* put it the next day in a brilliant editorial, is that Bevin's policy reflects both the sulky isolationism of the electorate and the defensive attitude of the governing class. The Tories revolted when Bevin's failure became unbearable, but they have nothing to put in place of his policy except better manners and an acuter sense of reality. The Arab League, after all, was glued together by Anthony Eden. And as for competing

with Israel "for the role of chief agent of the industrial revolution in the Middle East," the number of Conservative politicians who would welcome such a role can be counted on the fingers of one hand. It is true that the *Times*, in an important editorial written a week before the debate, pleaded for a new Middle Eastern policy based on Turkey and Israel rather than on the Arabs. But the *Times* is hardly a Conservative paper and many Tories regard it with distrust. In any case the new approach would have to be initiated by the Labor government—that is, by Bevin.

This is not a personal question. There are strong rumors that the Foreign Secretary has been cut down to size by his Cabinet colleagues and made to promise that in future his department will not act on its own. It is even suggested that the next Cabinet reshuffle may enable him to retire, with his Western Union and Atlantic Pact laurels intact, and that steps to this end are already being taken behind the scenes. Meanwhile the Foreign Office is evidently under orders to be polite to Israel and avoid any overt display of hostility. But all this is irrelevant. The real question is whether British policy-makers will continue to regard Israel as an active nuisance and a potential Soviet satellite, or whether they will view it as a focus of Westernization. Something of a struggle is evidently going on between the two schools, but so far there is no sign that the Foreign Office—to say nothing of the defense departments—has modified its original approach.

The government's political and military advisers on Middle Eastern matters have swung round from contemptuous disbelief in the Jewish state's capacity for self-defense to alarm at its unexpected strength. The corollary of this alarm is a desire to impose Procrustean territorial limits upon Israel while building up as rapidly as possible a viable Arab coalition led by an enlarged Transjordan. Hence the persistent Anglo-American dispute over the final boundaries of Israel, in which the Americans, however hesitantly, are taking the opposite side out of

a mixture of motives, among which sentimental pro-Zionism is certainly not the strongest.

What is at stake in this dispute is the famous balance-of-power, for a powerful and growing Israel implies a whole nexus of relationships that Britain will find it difficult to control. From the British viewpoint any arrangement is bad that compels London to "balance" Israel, not merely against Transjordan, but against the Arab League in general. What the Foreign Office wants is a Jewish state just big enough to accommodate a few more immigrants, sharing its mineral wealth with Transjordan, and restricted to a strip of Mediterranean coastline—not a genuinely independent state with access to the Indian Ocean and room for another million people. Mr. Bevin's insistence that Israel must either renounce the Negev or surrender Western Galilee, Jaffa, and Acre, and must in any case let go the southern Negev with Aqaba, springs not simply from his dislike of Jews but from a very genuine fear that an Israel that escapes such truncation will not be easily controlled—by Britain.

IT is easy to see that a truncated Israel will be tempted to burst its bounds at the first opportunity, and this argument is in fact used by Mr. Bevin's critics, both publicly and in private. Presumably it is also being employed in Washington. But to point the dilemma is not necessarily to suggest a solution.

Clearly there is no problem involved for the United States: however important Israel becomes in relation to her neighbors, she will always remain amenable to American influence; indeed there is a sense in which Israel might become the spearhead of American penetration. But this argument is not applicable to Britain in quite the same way. The best London can hope for is to establish good relations with Israel, and against this must be set the certainty that the appearance of a new independent power in the Middle East means the end of the old political nexus based on Arab domination and British control over the Arabs. America can easily

manage any conceivable balance-of-power among the Middle Eastern countries. Britain can with difficulty control a congeries of states of which Israel is the least important. Hence if the Middle Eastern policy is to be based in future, as the *Times* has suggested, on the two modern countries—Turkey and Israel—rather than on the backward Arab states, the over-all control will have to become Anglo-American rather than purely British.

Mr. Bevin has repeatedly declared himself ready for an agreed Anglo-American solution. The chances are he believes what he says: a capacity for self-deception is not the least striking of his many personal traits. But there is nothing to suggest that he realizes what Anglo-American agreement really implies. For the last three years he has been trying to get American support for a purely British solution, and a reactionary one at that. According to the latest despatches he is still trying to obtain State Department backing for a somewhat modified version of the Bernadotte Plan. Meanwhile his representatives in the Middle East are knocking together yet another Arab coalition, this time based on the faithful Nuri-es-Said in Iraq and the ever loyal Abdullah of Transjordan. There is nothing in all this that suggests a departure from the old policy of backing the Arab "master nation" against the "minorities" and identifying British interests with the social predominance of the land-owning oligarchy and the merchant class—twin pillars of the pre-industrial order which must stand or fall together.

A GAINST this unpromising background, British complaints about Israel's "Eastern" orientation are sharply accentuated by the internal difficulties of Egypt, Syria, and Iraq—the three Arab countries with a genuine "social problem." Every boatload of immigrants from Eastern Europe, every manifestation of pro-Sovietism on the part of the Socialist "Left" in Israel, underscores the complaint that Israel is "potentially" a Soviet satellite—although privately it is admitted that there are more Communists in Lebanon,

and better opportunities for them in almost any other Middle Eastern country.

In this propaganda there is undoubtedly an important element of deliberate goose-pimpling: witness the speed with which it was turned on and off during the January crisis, when the Foreign Office, the BBC, and the subservient section of the public press alternately raged against the Israeli "Reds" and praised the democratic character of the elections to the Constituent Assembly. (As one fairly well-informed Britisher said to this writer: "Naturally, when they saw that the Americans wouldn't buy it, they gave it up. What would you have done?") But there is also genuine nervousness among a caste of officials whose Oxford education and Roman Catholic or Anglo-Catholic backgrounds do not predispose them to a clear understanding of the difference between the various brands of modern socialism. For some of these people all East European Socialists are suspect, and since the Czech coup they have had some superficial warrant for their apprehensions. They may not seriously believe that there are Soviet officers in the Israeli air force, but they do believe that Israel will become a fertile field for Soviet propaganda. That most of the recent immigrants from Eastern Europe have been inoculated against Stalinism is a little more than they can grasp.

And even the more sober-minded among the government's advisers are worried by the spectacle of Soviet-American competition in a field so important to Britain. They recognize that American support of Israel has set up a powerful counter-attraction against whatever material and moral aid Israel received from the East during the critical months. They are aware that, given the choice, six out of seven Israelis would opt for the West, and that the dominant forces in the labor movement, the army, and the government are committed to a Western orientation. But again the question arises: can Britain afford to sponsor the growth and development of a state whose internal tensions reflect the current pattern of world politics? In the Middle East of all places?

In taking up this question, the above-mentioned *Times* editorial drew a distinction between modern countries like Turkey and Israel, "which have already had their revolution," and the Arab countries which have not. The conclusion is obvious and the article did not hesitate to draw it. But this type of reasoning is unfamiliar to British Conservatives, and *a fortiori* to Arabs, for whom "the revolution" has only one meaning. It amounts to saying that only democratic countries are safe for capitalism—a statement to which both Liberals and Marxists would agree. Certainly Turkey, since the Kemalist revolution, has become a good deal safer for investors, domestic and foreign, than it used to be under the Ottomans. One may also suspect that Egypt, which "has not had its revolution," is by comparison highly unsafe, and that the same applies to Syria, Iraq, and Iran.

Israel is, of course, quite safe despite (or because of) its powerful democratic-socialist labor movement. The fact that Communists are free to organize the remaining Arabs and that Mapam plays an important part in public life can be interpreted in various ways. Most people would regard it as a sign of strength, and point up the appropriate contrast with Egypt, where the government, harassed by the extreme Right and its terrorists, is also mortally afraid of the handful of Communists and suspicious of the mildest agitation for reform. This point of view has its supporters among Liberals and progressive Conservatives in Britain, and it is of course the prevailing opinion within the Labor party. One may hazard the guess that, with the help of some gentle prodding from Washington, this opinion will gradually translate itself into policy. But the change-over will not be easy, and the old arguments will crop up at every step. For to take an unromantic view of the Arabs is to question a good deal of the remaining Imperial *mystique*.

SOONER or later the British outlook will nonetheless have to be readjusted, especially if Mr. Bevin is unsuccessful in his

final attempt to integrate a diminutive Israel into a Middle East controlled by a handful of British officials in Cairo and Amman. When the curtain has descended on this abortive intrigue, the following position is likely to emerge:

1. Israel will be genuinely independent, predominantly Western, but careful to preserve official neutrality as between the two worlds. As the only genuinely modern, industrial, and democratic state in the Middle East, it will be a powerful focus of Western influence. Socially, it will represent modern social democracy and modern capitalism, both unknown in the Arab world. Militarily, it will be stronger than all its neighbors combined, with the single exception of Turkey.

2. The United States will increasingly regard the Jewish state as a cornerstone of its own Middle Eastern policy.

3. Britain will continue its traditional policy of defending Islamic interests and shielding the Arabs from the impact of the industrial revolution, but will not display hostility to the Jewish state.

On this reading of the situation, Mr. Bevin and the Foreign Office are still trying, not very successfully, to catch up with reality instead of molding it to their purpose. This reproach was repeatedly flung at them during the House of Commons debate, and with good reason. But it must be recognized that they had a difficult problem on their hands. Their reckless championship of the Arab states, at a time when the Arab armies were being thrashed by the improvised militia of Israel, had brought disaster on the Arabs and at the same time alienated Israel to such a degree that it became possible to speak of an anti-British bias on the part of the Israeli government and people. Having tried in its propaganda to class Israel among the nations behind the Iron Curtain, the Foreign Office had to climb down and admit its mistake in full view of public opinion. It was forced to do so, moreover, in such a way as not to

antagonize the Arab states. Mr. Bevin's solution was to make it clear to the whole world that he was yielding to superior force.

On present showing he still regards himself as an honest broker for the Arabs in their dealings with the modern world. This used to be Tory policy. It is the measure of Bevin's personal failure that he forced the Tories into opposition. If his own party has made no serious effort to replace him, it cannot be said to trust him any longer.

But having said this, one reverts once more to the abiding realities: Arab weakness and irresponsibility, and the problem of turning Palestine from a storm center into an island of stability. British policy, since the collapse of the Turkish Empire, was based on the belief that the Arabs were destined to become the "political nation" of the Middle East, whose position would somewhat resemble that of the Magyar gentry-nation in old Hungary, with its oppressed non-Magyar peasant minorities who numerically outweighed the Magyar *Herrenvolk*. French control of Syria-Lebanon did not fit into this scheme, and so the French were got rid of. Zionism ceased to fit in when it became genuinely powerful, and an attempt was made to get rid of Zionism. Instead a Jewish state came into being, while the Arab League displayed a degree of military weakness and political irresponsibility that discredited it in the UN and elsewhere.

At the beginning of this year, Arab irresponsibility and Foreign Office miscalculation, by precipitating a crisis, brought the underlying dangers to light and forced a revision of policy. Towards such a revision the recognition of Israel was a first step, and one would have liked to think that the British government was beginning to envisage a policy of basing its position in the Middle East on good relations with the Jewish state. But so great a mental change is apparently not to be looked for at this early stage.

THE END OF SERGEI EISENSTEIN

Case History of an Artist under Dictatorship

WACLAW SOLSKI

IN 1925 I was working for the Sovkino in Moscow, having come to Russia shortly before as an adviser on movie production for the foreign market.

One day three men came to my office. One was short, plump, with lively, piercing eyes, an unusually high forehead, and a great shock of hair. A strange, semi-sarcastic smile never left his face. His voice had an unpleasantly squeaky quality to it. Everything about him was roundish—his head, face, body, and even his arms and legs. This was my first meeting with Eisenstein.

With him was his ace cameraman, Edward Tissé, a Lett who had been a painter before he became one of the greatest living cameramen. The third guest was Eisenstein's assistant—now a film director in his own right—Gregor Aleksandrov, who had begun his movie-making career in a rather unusual fashion: he had been a circus tight-rope walker, and had a bad fall one night when Eisenstein, who was a great circus fan, happened to be in the audience. Moved by the accident, Eisenstein became interested in the young performer and from that time on they were inseparable friends.

WHEN Sergei Eisenstein died a year ago, the world lost one of the great innovators of the modern cinema, and the Soviet Union its most prominent movie director. His early movies, *Potemkin* and *Ten Days That Shook the World*, were something new in the art of the film: they have influenced, to one degree or another, every production made since. But the development of his career is also significant as testimony to the dismal fate of the artist in a totalitarian society. WACLAW SOLSKI knew Eisenstein well. He also has an intimate and expert acquaintance with Russian culture and Russian society. Mr. Solski has had nineteen books published in Europe—in Russian, Polish, German, and French; his plays have been produced in Paris, Brussels, and Prague.

I UNDERSTAND that you're to pass on our films chosen for showing to the rotten bourgeoisie of the West," Eisenstein said, chuckling ironically. "What about my *Potemkin*? They won't understand it but they may like it. People sometimes like what they don't understand."

"Why do you think they won't understand it?" I asked.

"Because the Sovkino didn't understand it either," Eisenstein replied. "Did you see my *Potemkin*? I can assure you it is an excellent film, though its plot doesn't exactly adhere to the most recent political currents developing in this heaven-blessed land of ours."

I had only joined the Sovkino staff a few days before and didn't know anything about Eisenstein's film. He told me its story. *Potemkin*, later acknowledged by the whole world as one of the greatest films ever made, had been judged entirely worthless by the Sovkino Board at its first showing, and it was decided not to release it either in Russia or abroad. It was put in the so-called "morgue" along with other abortive pictures. Later, under Eisenstein's pressure, it was shown in one of the Moscow theaters, with hardly any publicity and with a very poor musical accompaniment (*Potemkin* was a silent movie). The showing was not a success, and after a very short run, the film was returned to the "morgue."

"Sovkino did everything to kill my film," Eisenstein added. "It is true that the public didn't like it very much, but that was because of the NEP.* The NEP-men would rather see half-naked girls on the screen than a

* The "New Economic Policy," introduced in Soviet Russia in 1921, relaxed restrictions on private enterprise in an effort to permit the country to recover after the ravages of the First World War and the civil war which followed.

serious film. But I'm not a NEP-man and I'm not interested in girls."

Gregor Aleksandrov suddenly burst into a short laugh, but quickly stopped and turned red. I couldn't see what he was laughing about. Not until later, when I learned what everyone in Moscow knew, did Aleksandrov's odd behavior become understandable to me.

I PROMISED Eisenstein to see *Potemkin*. This I did in a small sultry projection room at the Sovkino. The film was so badly glued together that it broke every few minutes. Perhaps that is why it did not make as great an impression on me then as it did later when I saw it in a regular theater. But even then, in that stuffy projection room, I felt that it was a major artistic triumph, that the director had introduced entirely new and revolutionary methods of montage and photography. I also understood Eisenstein's allusion to "new political currents."

In the movie field, the NEP was chiefly reflected by the all-out attempt to forget the sad past. Sovkino planned a large number of light comedies in the Hollywood style and also prepared some historical films quite different from *Potemkin*. It wanted to present Peter the Great, Catherine the Great, etc., in an "objective"—even, in those times, critical—light, but what it was really concerned with was to show the splendor of the old imperial courts, as a restorative for a people worn out by the rigors of revolution and civil war.

Vladimir Mayakovsky, the famous Soviet poet, saw *Potemkin* with me. His friend, the poet Assejev, had written the titles for it, and he was always loyal to his friends. Immediately after the showing, Mayakovsky and I went to see Sovkino's president, Konstantin Shvedshikov, a party man who once had hidden Lenin in his home before the Revolution. But this was long ago, and in 1925 Shvedshikov was a Soviet bureaucrat with pronounced bourgeois habits. He didn't know anything about movies, but he liked the products Hollywood sent to Moscow in hope of finding a Russian market. Sovkino

bought very few American films, but Shvedshikov used to spend hours enjoying them in his private projection room, and the more banal the movie, the better he liked it. He was also slightly anti-Semitic and he didn't like Eisenstein, whom, in private conversation, he used to call "The Nobleman of Jerusalem."

Mayakovsky took the floor first. He talked, as usual, in a thunderous voice, pounding the table with his fists and rapping on the floor with the heavy cane he always carried at that time. He demanded that Shvedshikov immediately export *Potemkin* and told him he would go down in history as a villain if he did not. Several times Shvedshikov tried to get a word in, but in vain. Nobody ever could say anything when Mayakovsky spoke. The climax of his speech was rather dramatic. Having finished, he turned to go.

"Are you through?" Shvedshikov asked. "If you are, I would like to say a few words myself."

Mayakovsky paused in the doorway and replied with great dignity: "I'm not through yet and I won't be for at least five hundred years to come. Shvedshikovs come and go, but art remains. Remember that!"

With that he left. I stayed behind and tried to argue with my boss in more reasonable terms, but in vain. It was only later, under the pressure of an ever-growing group of writers and journalists as well as some influential party men who liked the film, that Sovkino finally did agree to send *Potemkin* to Berlin.

A German composer, W. Meisel, wrote a special score for it, and its première in Berlin was a triumph. After this first success *Potemkin* was shown again in Moscow. This time the Soviet papers were full of Berlin reviews praising the picture and the public became so interested that its second Russian première had an overflow audience. Other triumphs followed. After *Potemkin's* American première in New York, Eisenstein was hailed as director of the best film ever made and he became world-famous almost overnight.

This writer cannot claim any credit for

helping to make this success possible. However, I am glad I at least tried to help Eisenstein, because this attempt was the beginning of a close acquaintance with one of the most interesting and most gifted men of our time.

SERGEI MIKHAILOVICH EISENSTEIN was born in St. Petersburg in 1898, the son of a prosperous ship-builder. He was a student at the St. Petersburg (now Leningrad) Institute of Civil Engineering when World War I broke out, and two years later went to the front as a private. After the Revolution, he remained in the army and organized amateur theatrical groups. Then he went to Moscow and soon became the chief set-designer for the Proletkult Theater, where he designed the sets for a great number of plays, most of them short propaganda pieces without any great artistic value.

The first play for which Eisenstein designed sets was entitled *Anti-Jesus*. The word "anti" was also used in the title of the Proletkult's next production, *Anti-Gas* (anti-poison gas). The public, however, soon became weary of "anti" propaganda pieces, and the Proletkult Theater began producing more serious plays: *Macbeth*, *Heartbreak House*, and *The Mexican* (based on a story by Jack London), for which Eisenstein also designed the sets.

In 1923, he not only designed, but also directed *Listen, Moscow*, which was written by Sergei Tretiakov, who was "liquidated" in the 1936-37 purges. It was a great success.

IT WAS at that time that Sovkino was organized in Moscow and the production of Soviet films began on a large scale. The legitimate stage had already become too confining for Eisenstein. He decided to make films, but he wanted to make them differently, dreaming of a camera "ranging through time and space." At the same time, he firmly believed that the making of a movie was primarily a mathematical problem that could and should be solved by mathematical methods. "I approach the making of a mo-

tion picture in much the same way that I would approach the installation of a water system," Eisenstein then declared. (Evelyn Gerstein's article in *Theatre Guild Magazine*, February 1930.) In an interview he said that he had three gods: Marx, Pavlov, and Freud. He even wanted to make Marx's *Das Kapital* into a motion picture.

I remember a talk with him a few years later; it must have been in 1926 or 1927. He was then re-reading everything Freud had written. Eisenstein was in an enthusiastic mood—the only mood, by the way, that made him temporarily drop his semi-ironical way of speaking. He told me that any one of Freud's volumes contained thousands of revolutionary film ideas and that he didn't see how one could make films or even write poetry without studying Freud.

"What about Pavlov?" I asked. "Do you still regard him as one of your three gods?"

"Of course I do," he answered, and told me about some interesting experiments based on Pavlov's theory of conditioned reflexes that he was then conducting at the Moscow Film Institute where he was a professor. He was just as enthusiastic about these as about Freud.

I remarked that Pavlov's theory could hardly be reconciled with Freud's. Our behavior, according to Freud, was to be explained by childhood events that had been relegated to the unconscious, but Pavlov had maintained that conditioned reflexes were *hereditary*; in other words, everything we do might be caused by some events connected, not with our own life, but with those of our ancestors.

But Eisenstein's train of thought had already gone elsewhere, and he began telling me about a talk he had had that day with a party man who criticized him because his films did not show the individual heroes of the Revolution, but only its masses. "I killed him with the text of the 'Internationale'," Eisenstein said. "Apparently he had never given a thought to it: 'Nobody will give us freedom, neither God, nor the czar, nor a hero'—that's what the 'Internationale' says. No hero! Besides, the worship of heroes, or

of any individuals whatever, has always seemed to me obscene, Asiatic, and immoral. I would never do it, never." A decade or so later Eisenstein was to produce *Alexander Nevsky* and *Ivan the Terrible*. But what he said at the time was undoubtedly completely sincere.

His first film was called *The Strike* and won him a prize at the 1925 Exposition des Arts Décoratifs in Paris, but it had only an average success in Russia. The film dealt with a strike in a Russian factory before the Revolution; no professional actors were employed, all the parts being played by amateurs, most of them genuine workers who had actually taken part in real strikes in czarist Russia. The picture was uneven: some of its episodes were excellent, but in others it was obvious that Eisenstein was still groping for new methods. He was to find these in *Potemkin*, his next film production.

THE HISTORY of *Potemkin* started with Nina Agadjanova-Shutko's suggestion that Eisenstein make a film about the abortive Russian Revolution of 1905. As originally planned, the movie was to be composed of six separate episodes for release in 1925, the 20th anniversary of the 1905 revolution.

The mutiny of the cruiser *Potemkin's* sailors on the Black Sea was to be only one of the six episodes. Many scenes earmarked for the other parts were filmed first. But when Eisenstein began shooting scenes for the *Potemkin* episode in Odessa and Sevastopol, he decided that its material was so much the best that he would concentrate on it and expand it. And so he wrote a new script, eliminating all the other episodes.

Potemkin is probably the only film ever made that, after almost a quarter of a century, still makes as strong an impression as it did when first released. Almost all other old films now seem dated—not because of their plots, but because of their technique. Movie technique has made such great and rapid strides in the last twenty years that pictures tend to date very quickly. But the

technique of *Potemkin* was more than a quarter of a century ahead of its time.

Eisenstein's style was based on three main principles: montage, "dynamism," and what Eisenstein himself called "the synchronization of the senses." The creator of montage was Lev Kuleshov, who taught movie technique to both Eisenstein and Vsevolod Pudovkin. In his book on montage, Pudovkin wrote that no other director could be compared to Kuleshov. "We," he said, "are only making films: Kuleshov made the world's cinematography." Kuleshov gave as a classic demonstration of montage the fact that when a woman is shown on the screen, then a familiar view of Paris, followed by another shot of the woman, we automatically conclude that that woman must be in Paris—although actually she might have been photographed in Moscow. Thus montage can create new facts that never existed before. "Two film pieces of any kind," wrote Eisenstein, "placed together, inevitably combine into a new concept arising out of that juxtaposition." But these pieces "must be so selected from all the possible material that their juxtaposition shall evoke in the perception and feelings of the spectator the most complete image of the theme itself." (Sergei Eisenstein: *The Film Sense*, 1942.)

The principle of "dynamism" is a little more difficult to explain. "A work of art understood dynamically," wrote Eisenstein, "is just a process of arranging images in the feeling and mind of the spectator." This sounds innocent enough, but it isn't. To explain his idea, Eisenstein tells us first what an "image" is. For instance, a certain position of a clock's hands evokes in us the idea of the time of day. But sometimes, when too agitated or too preoccupied, we may look at the hands of a clock without reading the time from them. In this case the hands are only a "representation," not an "image," of time. It is not enough to see the hands—something has to happen to that perception before we realize what time it is. The process, as Eisenstein describes it, is this: a given order of hands on the dial provokes "representations" connected with this order. The

position of the hands on the clock at 5 PM will call up the subway rush hour, stores closing, etc., etc. The *image* of five o'clock is compounded of all these individual images, which constitute the full sequence of the process; but our mind "condenses" the process and, as a result, "the chain of intervening links falls away and an instantaneous connection is felt between the geometrical figure on the clock and our perception of the time." This is what takes place in our everyday life. But practice in life is different from practice in art. To achieve a similar result, art must "re-condense" the process, or, as Eisenstein puts it, "direct all the refinement of its methods to the process itself." Thus the spectator "is being drafted into the process as it occurs," instead of receiving "the represented result of a consummated process."

EISENSTEIN maintains that this "dynamic" principle applies to all the arts, even to painting. This is perhaps a little too far-reaching a claim, but there is no doubt that in movie-making the principle does work. This is true of all of Eisenstein's pictures, and especially of *Alexander Nevsky*. The battle on Lake Peipus in this film is shown through the medium of hundreds of details: pieces of ice, the gray sky with its tonality, the weapons of the German knights, and so forth.

When seeing the film, we "condense" all these images, we don't actually *see* them in the usual meaning of the word—and yet they evoke in us, as a final result, the feelings the creator of the film wanted to evoke. We witness the creation of an image and its connotations, rather than simply making use of the image as we do when we notice the time of day on a clock.

Eisenstein's third principle is the "synchronization of the senses," as opposed to "physical" or "technical" synchronization. When we see a gun firing and hear the explosion at the same time that is "physical" or "technical" synchronization. But it is also an "objective" synchronization. The artist, however, cannot be objective. He must look

at everything through the subjective prism of his own emotions. Between a "physical synchronization" and a "synchronization of the senses," as Eisenstein understands it, there is the same difference as that between a photograph of a person and the same person's portrait painted by an artist. The photograph may be the more exact likeness, but it can never influence our feelings, for only a work of art can radiate and evoke emotions. Thus, in film-making, it is entirely unnecessary—except for the spoken word—to have the image exactly correspond to the sound-track. On the contrary: the artist, disregarding "objective" reality, must organize the images and sounds in such a way that their blend can stimulate the desired emotions in the spectator.

Eisenstein once told me that shortly after *Potemkin* was shown in America, certain Hollywood producers placed metronomes in their studios because someone had told them that *Potemkin's* excellence was due to its having been shot "rhythmically." This was the height of nonsense and the metronomes of course had no effect whatsoever on these producers' pictures. Yet even the correct application of Eisenstein's theories would have helped Hollywood but little. Eisenstein was above all a great artist, and great artists are born, not made. His theories may help us understand how he made his films, but they could hardly teach us how to make them.

FOR A short period following the unparalleled success of *Potemkin*, Eisenstein was the happiest man in the world. He had proved the effectiveness of his theories and he had—or at least thought he had—the means at hand to create many more films that would be revolutionary in plot as well as in form. He was never a party Bolshevik—in fact, he never belonged to any political party—but he sincerely believed Russia was the only country in the world where the artist could work freely, listening only to the voice of his own conscience and disregarding the box office or the common denominators of public taste.

Three years later this dream castle crashed—with his next film, *October*.

October was shown in America under the title *Ten Days That Shook the World*. The title was taken from John Reed's famous book, which was one of the first sympathetic accounts of the actual events of the Bolshevik Revolution to reach English-speaking readers. (This book has long since been banned in Russia—Trotsky and many of the old Bolsheviks liquidated in the Moscow Trials are prominently mentioned, but there is not a word about Stalin.)

Eisenstein's *October* was not a screen version of Reed's book, and probably acquired its American title simply for publicity reasons, but Eisenstein certainly had used Reed's book, as well as other material. And he made an honest and a very beautiful film about the Russian Revolution. But only a few people have seen its original version.

Shortly after the film was completed, the Sovkino—in the person of the already mentioned Konstantin Shvedshikov—suggested that Eisenstein take Trotsky out of the film. Eisenstein refused. Although he didn't make his refusal public, everyone in the inner circles in Russia knew about it, and also knew that a few overly zealous young men were assigned to cut *October* against Eisenstein's will. The facts even became known in this country; a letter from Herman G. Weinberg in the *Modern Monthly* (July 1933) says:

"It is true that Eisenstein disavowed the mutilated form of *Ten Days That Shook the World* with the Trotsky episodes deleted. . . . *Ten Days* without the Trotsky episodes was meaningless as an historical document. This was enough to make Eisenstein disavow the emasculated version of his film."

But when his friends asked Eisenstein to disavow *October* publicly—which at that time was still possible in Soviet Russia—he could not bring himself to do it, and found his way out through compromise.

But a compromise with his own conscience is never easy for a great artist and almost always leaves scars. This is probably the reason why the film Eisenstein made after *October* was considerably weaker than

The Strike, *Potemkin*, or *October*. It was called *General Line* (shown in America as *The Old and the New*). The film dealt rather superficially with the changes the Revolution brought to the Russian villages, showing in loving detail new agricultural machines quite familiar to American audiences as well as to those of many other countries long before they became the symbol of revolution on the Russian countryside. The whole film dissolved into a long-winded paean to tractors, modern dairies, big cows, and vigorous bulls. But modern dairies and scientific agriculture in themselves have little in common with revolution as such, and the Soviet press pointed this out to Eisenstein. Some of the critics, acute enough to scent the fragrance of things to come, also attacked Eisenstein for his criticism of Soviet bureaucracy (*General Line* likens a typewriter in the office of some bureaucrat to a machine gun: millions of unnecessary words kill the efforts of the hard-working people of the villages).

Shortly afterwards, Eisenstein received an offer from Hollywood. The Soviet government did not oppose his going to America to accept it, probably being glad to get rid of him for the time being, since he had become a little too hot to handle. This was at the end of 1929.

EISENSTEIN came to Hollywood as a \$3,000-a-week man at Paramount, with a contract entitling him to choose his own stories. Several suggested to him by Paramount he rejected. Then he made his own suggestion: Theodore Dreiser's *An American Tragedy*. The suggestion was accepted, but the script Eisenstein wrote wasn't. Other projects of his met with the same fate. He soon realized that it was no easier for him to make films in Hollywood than in Moscow: Moscow wanted him to produce films imbued with political tendencies that didn't appeal to him, while Hollywood demanded pictures without revolutionary ideas but with strong box-office appeal.

Eisenstein terminated his contract with Paramount and signed a new one with Up-

ton Sinclair, who organized a trusteeship called the Mexican Picture Trust, and sent him to Mexico, where he began *Que Viva Mexico!* a film dealing with the Mexican revolution of 1910.

For Eisenstein, the most important part of movie-making was montage. From the 200,000 feet of material he shot in Mexico, he had to select around 7,000 feet—which is the length of the average movie—for the final product. Just as Eisenstein began the montage work he was called back to Moscow and had to leave behind his uncompleted movie. The trusteeship offered the entire 200,000 feet of film he had shot to the Soviet government for \$100,000, but the Russians refused to buy. Finally, an American producer, Sol Lesser, acting on behalf of the Mexican Picture Trust and without Eisenstein's consent, put together a version of the movie that was shown under the name of *Thunder Over Mexico*. This version was not much good and it certainly bore no traces whatsoever of the ideas Eisenstein had intended to put into it. Many American writers and film men protested against this mutilated version, and an "International Defense Committee for Eisenstein's Mexican Film" was formed in New York with branches in the United States, Mexico, Cuba, and Europe. But all in vain; nothing could be done in the way of creating a more authentic version.

EISENSTEIN returned to Moscow in 1932 full of new ideas, resolved to keep aloof from inner-party conflicts and looking for some sort of neutral ground. While still in America he had suggested to Sovkino the screening of Ostrowski's classic play, *Enough Simplicity in Every Wise Man*, which he had once produced for the Proletkult Theater. The suggestion was enthusiastically accepted, but apparently only in order to entice Eisenstein back to Russia. Once he was back his idea was immediately rejected. And all his other proposals met the same fate, Sovkino rejecting them as fast as Hollywood had. On orders from above, the Soviet press began to attack Eisenstein, ac-

cusing him of individualism, of inability "to understand the historical meaning of the epoch," etc., etc. The idea was to make it clear to him that he was to do what he was told, or else nothing. Eisenstein was stubborn and pretended not to understand, so one day he was simply fired, and refused access to the Sovkino studios.

Eisenstein's "softening up" took all of five years, during which time he remained unemployed. By 1937 he was broken. According to some usually reliable sources, Stalin had a long talk with him, and immediately thereafter Eisenstein began work on a new film, *Alexander Nevsky*. One year later, in 1938, the film was released.

Alexander Nevsky deals with the Muscovite resistance to invasion by the Teutonic Knights of the Cross in 1242. It is a highly patriotic film, but its beauty is monumental, unimpassioned, and utterly cold. With this film, Eisenstein confirmed what he had once said about approaching the making of a movie in the same way as the installation of a water system. *Alexander Nevsky* is the magnificent work of a magnificent technician of art, but not of an artist. Just how brilliant a technician Eisenstein was, he showed in the great climactic scene of the film, the battle on Lake Peipus, which was "shot" in the middle of a hot Moscow summer, in a space scarcely 1,000 feet square. Yet on the screen this sequence appears to have been made in the dead of winter on a great frozen lake. Icy winds and snow flurries seem to beat down on the spectator from the screen. The sound track, with its "subjectively" exaggerated roaring of the wind, reinforces this impression. And there is also the superb musical score expressly written for the film by Prokofieff.

Alexander Nevsky was highly praised in the Soviet press. Eisenstein was awarded the Order of Lenin for it and later the Stalin Prize. In the opinion of the Kremlin, he was now "softened" enough to be given another and much more important task. In fact there are certain indications that *Alexander Nevsky* was merely a sort of preliminary test. Only after Eisenstein had successfully

passed it did Stalin consider him trustworthy enough to be given the most important political assignment of his life.

Eisenstein was now assigned the task of justifying Stalin's policies, particularly the Moscow Trials. This was to be done in an indirect, rather than a direct way, through the medium of a pseudo-historical film, *Ivan the Terrible*.

IVAN THE TERRIBLE played a very important part in Russian history. Everybody knows that he personally murdered his own son; that he had thousands of people tortured and slaughtered *en masse* at Novgorod; that he organized the first Russian secret police (Oprishniki), which extorted confessions by refined torture. Often, when Ivan could not sleep, he had victims brought to his palace and tortured to death simply for his own amusement.

And this is not all. Ivan in the film has only one true and close friend, Fedor Kolyshev. This Kolyshev had indeed existed, but he never played the role ascribed to him in the film, being in reality a figure of very minor historical importance. In the film, however, he betrays Ivan in the end and joins the opposition. Now it is widely known in Russia that Stalin had only one close personal friend, Avel Yenukidze. Yenukidze was a Georgian, an old Bolshevik who had known Stalin from boyhood and later worked with Stalin in Tiflis, where the latter had begun his political career. Later Yenukidze held important government and party posts and was for many years general secretary of the Supreme Soviet—the Russian “parliament.” Then, one day in 1937, it was briefly announced in the Soviet press that Avel Yenukidze had been executed for “treachery.” There was no trial; his crime was never explained more fully; and his name was never mentioned again in the Soviet press.

But most revealing of all in *Ivan the Terrible* is the film sequence dealing with Ivan's wife. As the movie has it, she was deeply devoted to him. One day she learned by accident of Andrei Kurbski's conspiracy

against her husband. For reasons not made very clear in the movie, she did not tell Ivan and was murdered later by Kurbski's men.

Russia's history does not give any warrant whatsoever to this story, but it strangely resembles the circumstances surrounding the sudden death of Stalin's own wife, Nadezda Alleluyeva, in 1932. According to rumors circulated at that time, she had committed suicide, but there were also rumors that she had been poisoned. But recently Pauline Labranche, a Frenchwoman who for many months tutored Stalin's daughter, Svetlana, published an article that perhaps solves the mystery. Svetlana, Nadezda's daughter, told the story to Madame Labranche herself, saying her mother had loved her father very much, had always worried about his health, and “*tasted everything that was cooked for him an hour before he ate it.*” (*Pageant*, April-May, 1948.)

Towards the end of the film, Ivan is shown as an ill, half-broken man. He had lost all his friends (they had been murdered on his own orders), he is alone, entirely alone. But he still believes in “the simple Russian people” who are not involved in conspiracies of any kind, and who do not belong to the boyars' class, like Andrei Kurbski and Ivan himself. One of these people, the peasant Basmanov, gives Ivan a piece of advice. “Surround thyself with new men,” he tells Ivan, “men who come from the lower depths and who will be indebted to thee for everything. Make of them an iron ring. Surround thyself with this ring and put sharp barbs into it, directed against thine and Russia's enemies.” Ivan's eyes light up: once again, he is ready to fight his and Russia's foes.

We know that Stalin himself has followed Basmanov's program pretty closely. But Eisenstein, for all his effort to carry out orders, could not help remaining an artist, and his film version of a “progressive,” “revolutionary” Ivan is enveloped in an atmosphere of dark, oppressive fear. It took some time for the men of the Kremlin to realize this. When the first part of *Ivan the Terrible* was shown in Moscow in January 1945, the film was highly praised in the official press.

However, a short time later Eisenstein suddenly found himself again under attack. He was accused of "advocating art for art's sake," of having failed to adhere to "contemporary realism," of being an "erroneous formalist," etc., etc.

It was quite evident that the Kremlin suspected him of having deliberately created the movie's heavy, almost unbearable atmosphere. Its second part was suppressed while the attacks in the press became even stronger. Following a long-established Soviet custom, Eisenstein promptly admitted that he had "permitted a distortion of historical facts" that made his film "bad and ideologically defective." He promised to do better, and began work on a new script. But his heart refused to carry the burden any longer and, on February 10, 1948, Sergei Eisenstein died.

EISENSTEIN was never arrested and never put on trial in Russia. But he must have lived under the constant fear of arrest, for he once described his own trial, jotting down on paper the following: "I am on trial and I look at the courtroom. The hall is crowded with people who know me—some casually, some very well. . . . I try to shrink by gazing at my feet. . . . Like blow upon blow fall the words of the prosecuting attorney's summing up. . . . My return from prison: the clang of the gates closing behind me as I am released. . . . The astonished stare of the servant girl when she sees me enter my old block. . . . There is a new name on the letter box. . . . My door is closed in my face by the former acquaintances who now occupy my apartment. . . . I turn back. . . . The hurriedly raised collar of a passer-by who recognizes me. . . ." (*The Film Sense*.)

Eisenstein prudently added that the above was merely an example of how a film story should be written. But reading this tragic

sample of double talk now, I cannot help remembering Sergei Eisenstein's sarcastic smile. It even seemed for a moment that I was again hearing his voice, with its always half-serious, half-ironical tone.

Once at a party, in his Moscow apartment, I examined photographs stuck on the walls. One showed a group of people photographed from a considerable height. Next to it were two photographs of the same woman, one depicting her laughter, the other with her face contorted in tears. I asked Eisenstein what these pictures meant.

"It is very simple," he said with a chuckle. "Here you can see a few people. There is a man among them who perhaps has a mistress . . . or maybe a wife he's in love with—who knows? And here is a girl—maybe a nice girl who loves flowers and such things. And others . . . quite ordinary people, I guess. But when you look at them from the height of a rock, they all seem very small, very unimportant, in fact, *they hardly exist*. Now, the other photographs are a little more difficult to explain. The woman laughs, and then she cries. But the basic expression of her face in both cases is almost the same. Why? Well, I don't know why. Maybe because it is caused by the convulsion of the same muscles. Or maybe because, after all, there is not such a big difference between laughter and tears, revolution and counter-revolution, an admiral and a rear-admiral—who is called, as you know, a *contre-admiral*, in Russian. . . ."

"There's certainly no difference between an admiral and a *contre-admiral*," someone remarked. "The admiral is simply a *contre-admiral*, or so I think."

"Is he?" Eisenstein asked. "Well, maybe he is, but he doesn't know it. Or does he?"

It wasn't healthy to carry on such a conversation in Moscow. Someone quickly changed the subject.

THE GIRL WHO LOVED SEDERS

A Story

RALPH MANHEIM

ON THE first balmy afternoon in spring a young woman lay flat on a narrow couch-bed over Eighth Street, moaning gently. She did not seem to be in pain but rather in a state of trance. Her eyes were half closed, a cigarette dangled not far from the floor, in a hand almost too weak to lift it; from time to time a little shudder, a sensuous ripple passed over her.

The moaning gathered volume, her lips moved, words shaped themselves out of the rhythm of her moans. A liturgical chant, expressive of infinite longing, but also of the rapture of being together in longing. She began to roll a little from side to side. And these were the words she intoned:

"Shnei oichzin betalis zeh oimer ani metsatiha vezeh oimer ani metsatiha."

THE key turned in the lock, Orlansky came in, beheld, and said: "Oh my God, Pesach!"

He put on water for coffee.

"Il ne manquait plus que ça," he muttered. He taught Romance languages at the University. He took up the *Woolgatherer* and opened to an article entitled: "This as That, a Study in Ambivalence." But he did not sit down. There was this Pesach hanging over him and besides, the water would soon boil.

"Non ci mancherebbe altro," he grumbled. He glanced at the water. No, not boiling. He paced to the window, the magazine open

before him. This habit of muttering the same thing in three languages was beginning to alarm him. But he couldn't be getting senile at thirty-two, could he? Perhaps in an era with no other perspective than fission, one aged more rapidly. Or perhaps at a time when there was nothing to say, nothing of unquestioned validity, it gave him a sense of fulness to repeat these empty little things in a variety of tongues. Having convinced himself that it was all right, he concluded in English: "That's all I needed."

He looked glumly out the window. Then he turned back and studied the magazine. "But it's all wrong," he exclaimed, tugging significantly at his lower lip. "He can't get away with it. I'll write a rejoinder. 'That as This.' That's what I'll call it. 'That as This.' Hm."

The water boiled. Orlansky poured the just amount into the dripolator. This was the only thing he knew how to do with his hands. The maneuver gave him a keen satisfaction, and every time he performed it he reflected that he should have learned a trade.

Sheila opened her eyes and said: "Hello, I guess I've been napping."

They sat down to coffee. "Uncle Mordecai called," said Sheila.

"I don't doubt it."

"And we're going to the seder."

Orlansky said nothing but went back to the *Woolgatherer*.

"Why don't you want to go to the seder?"

"Listen to this," said Orlansky in a tone of outrage. "In itself, *this* has ceased to be significant. But as a function of *that* it assumes the opacity of the diurnal and becomes fraught with possibility!"

HE WAS really thinking about Uncle Mordecai for whom he had considerable

RALPH MANHEIM—whose story "The Voice of the Blood" appeared in the August 1948 COMMENTARY—was born in New York City in 1907 and studied at Harvard University. Mr. Manheim is a well-known translator; he translated Hitler's *Mein Kampf* into English (Houghton Mifflin, 1943). He has contributed articles and stories to a number of magazines.

affection, mingled with considerable animosity. Uncle Mordecai said: "A new joke is like herring without salt. Give it time to age, ripen, and pickle." He was a lover of series. He was so deeply embedded in tradition that he didn't mind what vulgarians he sat down to seder with. He carried them on his shoulders. When Sheila first appeared, he bristled at the *shiksa*. But not for long. For her too a place could be found. He gathered her in, assimilated her with a joke. It began as a new joke, but year by year it aged, ripened, pickled. "He's such a dear," said Sheila.

"Do you realize what this charlatan is saying?"

"I love to sit on his lap, he has such clean whiskers."

"It's just a sneak assault on metaphysics."

"He said it wouldn't be the same without me. He said you were an *apikoires* but for my sake you were invited too. I couldn't refuse him. Just remember how he taught me the *Shnei oichzin*. It was my homecoming."

In one swift illumination Orlansky saw all the seders of the past few years. Sheila for her part pickled easily. After a certain point, regardless what anyone else might be saying or singing, she would be raptly intoning the *Shnei oichzin* as she called it. And Uncle Mordecai, with his kind smile, his clean whiskers, his wise hands would be signaling everyone to hold his peace.

"Besides," Sheila said. "I love seders."

He turned back to her and spoke with a sad diffidence. "Do we have to go this year? Can't we just forget about it?"

PERHAPS it was the hang-dog expression that aroused her. But the action that followed was too swiftly and precisely executed, it must have been in ferment for some time. She crossed the room to the flimsy wicker bookcase and with two sweeping strokes swept the books to the floor.

Orlansky was so overwhelmed he could do nothing but put away his rage. He didn't discard it but filed it away in his liver where it caused an intense disturbance. He could taste the sour juices rising to his mouth.

"Why did you do that?"

"Look at those shabby books. Your intellectual history. The intellectual history of all our friends. Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky. My, what happened then? The Spanish war. The Spanish war brings doubt. Plato. Maybe there's something in academic philosophy after all. The logical positivists turn up in their long overcoats. And don't forget phenomenology. And then Kierkegaard stalks into the room. And Existentialism. And always such passion. Everything changes. Nothing is left of what you used to be. But if you'd been a Jew. . . ."

"All right," he said. "We'll go to the seder."

"Do you realize," she went on, "that we've had five or six philosophies right here in this room? You'll say it's the fault of the housing shortage. But isn't that too many?"

"I said we'd go to the seder."

Sheila began to pick up the books with unabated fury. "That's the vilest thing you ever said to me. You think I've just been talking to get my way. You think I'm not bright enough to think about these things."

"That is wrong," said Orlansky stiffly. "I think you are very bright." Then all at once he was invaded by tenderness. He leaned down and helped her to pick up the remaining books.

"You are the real philosopher," he said. "You have the thirst for unity, *la soif de l'unité . . . la sete. . .*"

"No, I'm not a philosopher, I'm a *shiksa*."

"But you do thirst for unity?"

To Sheila life with a non-intellectual would have been inconceivable, as would life with a non-Jew. Yet this was as long and as intellectual as an intellectual discussion between them had ever been. A swift flash of understanding, and then abruptly she would feel a strangeness and irritation. She could not live in this element. She wanted it to be there beside her, she needed it there beside her, but it must not touch her too often.

"I don't thirst for one philosophy," she said. "I thirst for one God."

At this moment Orlansky was quite reconciled to the seder. He himself was without religious devotion, but ever since Marxism he had favored it in principle and when he

saw it in Sheila he was quite overcome. Fortunately it seized her only periodically, he could not have stood too much of it. There was indeed something beautiful, and perhaps even profoundly meaningful in her fervid singing of *Shnei oichzin*. For her these words were not weighted down with any specific meaning; they were the essence and elixir of religious yearning. And the joke? Perhaps Uncle Mordecai understood all this. He would have to ask him some time. But he suspected Uncle Mordecai would play the inscrutable. He liked Sheila better than her *apikoires* of a husband. The old goat, he likes her because she sits on his lap. But he's ashamed of himself so he keeps up this silly joke at her expense.

How much enthusiasm wears thin because women take longer to dress than men! That is why couples who set out on the long dreary journey to visit relatives are so utterly dispirited. Irritation festers not only in the man who has been kept waiting but even more so in the woman who is irritated by his irritation, even when he assures her that he is happily reading the paper.

They rode uptown in somber silence. The festival was over, they had suffered its whole experience. It was really next day, a plain day. But the flesh must drag the weary spirit up to West End Avenue. The flesh is always willing, it makes appointments and keeps them, the spirit trails along. Oh, once it started, everything would change. There would be dear Uncle Mordecai and Uncle Lou and Tante Bessie and the children and *efsher a glezl shnaps*. . . .

But maybe everything wouldn't be different. So much food. And all these uptown people with their mechanical ritual. *She* believed in it, but did they? No, she didn't want to go to any old seder. In the drafty dark station she felt completely discouraged. "Pess me pliz der svit mit bittere oibs," she mumbled, she didn't know how loud.

Maybe he hadn't heard, and then it would be as if she hadn't spoken. Before God. Because God knew there was no trace of the anti-Semite in her. Hadn't she married a

Jew? Well, that proved nothing, that might be an exception. But who was it who created a scandal if a Jew was insulted in the bus? Was it Orlansky, who buried himself in his paper, or turned so pale she thought he was going to faint, or got off the bus, declaring afterwards: I should have punched him in the nose. No, it was Sheila who stamped and screamed and whipped up public sentiment.

But he had heard.

"What made you say that?" He assumed a lofty, ethical tone that wounded her. If Jews could joke about themselves, why couldn't she? Hadn't she thrown in her lot with them? Before God?

"To tell you the tru-uth," she chanted, "I don't care for Jewish women."

Man and woman arguing in the wilderness. All year long he understood her vagaries but in this bleak uptown street his soul shrank. A dusty wind was blowing from the river. Paris was not strange, Rome was not strange, but this part of town was strange.

"You lousy anti-Semite," he hissed, and his own vulgarity shocked him into further fury. "You don't like Jewish women! My mother is a Jewish woman. My sister is a Jewish woman. . . ."

"And you don't like them either," she squeezed in.

"You don't like Jewish women and you drag me to these things so you can see a lot of Jewish women over-eating; so you can see how quaint we are, how different from other people. 'Why is this people different from other people?'"

And then his anger brought him a terrible inspiration. The very perfidy and meanness of it lured him. "I've had enough," he said. "I'm going to put an end to it."

ALREADY they stood in the shadow of the huge West End Avenue emporium with its expanse of marble facings. There was an unprecedented menace in his tone. She stopped still.

"And how are you going to do that?"

She seemed shaken. A dim light of compassion shone in his heart, but the momentum of wrath carried him on.

"Have you any idea," he asked, "what 'shnei oichzin' means?"

Suddenly she was all changed. She laughed from her soul. "Of course I do."

"Well, what does it mean?" He bit his lip. In the presence of this ingenuous light-heartedness he was ashamed of himself.

"Isn't this silly?" she said. "You know and I know. Why should I tell you?"

"No, tell me," he insisted with the stubbornness of shame.

"Well," she said, "it's from the Talmud. And it means: two men grab hold of a prayer shawl. This one says, I found it. And this one says I found it."

For a moment he was stunned. And then

he was caught up in her laughter. "But when did you find out?"

"Oh, a couple of years ago."

"And how could you keep it up like that every year?"

"It was expected of me."

"But you put such feeling into it."

"Well, for me it has a special meaning. And you'll see what feeling I put into it tonight."

They passed through the marble portal, the elevator bore them skyward, a door opened among doors, and behind it lights and voices and chicken steam. And suddenly twenty-eight people, including children, were all saying "Sholom aleichem" at once.

THE BRIDE

HYMAN SWETZOFF

—to a painting by Hyman Bloom

WHERE once the skin held the tongue
behind and the mask together
there is now the yellow death
of her thin bones curving
one from the other a multitude
of bridges tiny venice
for an insect's honeymoon.

Hear she hears the echo
the only re-echo of one
more grain of dirt as it slips
slips and falls covering
her forgotten throat dressed

dark waits my bride floating
drifts down ecstatic she
sings sang sung like anyone
in her dirty catacombs
no more room left for dying.

HYMAN SWETZOFF has published poetry in *Accent*, *Pacific*, *Here and Now*, *Tricolor*, and other magazines. A volume of his poems, *Ins/Outs*, was brought out by Bern Porter earlier this year. Mr. Swetzoff was born in Boston in 1920, studied at the University of Iowa, and now lives in Boston.

FROM THE AMERICAN SCENE

AN ORTHODOX G.I. FIGHTS A WAR

Memoirs of a Stiff-Necked Jew

GOTTFRIED NEUBURGER

IT STARTED at once, in the improvised mess hall in the crowded induction center in Grand Central Palace. A corporal stood at the end of the chow line and looked at the large, flat metal tray I was holding.

"What's the matter? Are you sick?"

The large compartments of the tray were empty. In one of the small spaces in a corner was a helping of fruit salad, flanked by two slices of bread. The only other item was a cup of black coffee.

"No," I said, "I'm on a diet."

"You won't last long with that kind of a diet."

I did not answer him, but I feared he was right. That very thought had worried me ever since General Watson had reassured me in a letter from the White House in 1940: "The President is personally concerned that every possible consideration be given to the moral and physical welfare of our Jewish soldiers. . . ." and again a few weeks later, "the President feels certain that the religious

interests of your people will not be seriously jeopardized and that in due time a means will be found to meet the situation. . . ."

Well, the truth was that no means had been found. Thousands of soldiers found themselves faced with dilemmas of conscience in regard to Sabbath observance, dietary laws, and the innumerable other problems arising daily, indeed almost hourly, from the conflict between religious observance and military duty. Many solutions had been proposed but all in the end had been rejected as impracticable. Kosher food kitchens, for instance, would be feasible only if there were separate Jewish units. Nobody wanted that—there was to be no "Jewish brigade" in the US Army.

Of course, the problem was not a new one. The saintly Chofetz Chaim had written a special book, *Camp of Israel*, on the subject of religious observance in the modern army. Still, all decisions had to be made individually, from case to case, from day to day. Fortunately there were certain rules we could go by. Under no circumstances was the Sabbath to be desecrated voluntarily or for private, non-military purposes. Sometimes it was possible to volunteer for Sunday duty in order to be off on Saturday. It was also SOP (standard operating procedure) to volunteer for KP and similar duties on Christmas and other Christian holidays. Above all we knew one thing: we had to be especially conscientious soldiers at all times. Nobody was going to be able to accuse us of using religion as a means of "gold-bricking."

And it worked. The corporal in Grand Central Palace was wrong after all. Enlisted

For thousands of Orthodox Jews in the American Army in World War II, there was a private battle that had to be fought from day to day within the framework of the larger war—a battle to fulfill the requirements of traditional Jewish law without impairing military efficiency. GOTTFRIED NEUBURGER here tells the story of the resourceful campaign of one such soldier. Mr. Neuburger was born in Munich in 1907 and was editor of the magazine *Flux-Berichte* and a columnist for *Moriah*. He came to this country in 1927 and studied at New York University, Georgetown University, and Columbia. He is now president of International Trade Fairs, Inc.

men and officers kept the "diet," with modifications due to country or season, through North Africa and France and the Pacific, in the infantry and the combat engineers and the service units, in the army and in the navy. Strangely enough, or perhaps not so strangely, these men were not the target of anti-Semitism; they were—at least as long as the fighting lasted—treated by other soldiers and superiors alike with respect and consideration.

THE whistle blew and the lights went on. In a moment the room was full of noise. One half of the platoon slept on this upper floor of the barracks, the two rows of bunks lined up carefully to a fraction of an inch. On my right was Pop, the fat Yugoslav, on my left Wung, from Chinatown. On the opposite side was Otto Meyer from Yorkville, formerly a member of the Reichswehr, who had proved to be a crack shot on the rifle range.

In five minutes the first sergeant would come up and turn over, with a slight motion of one of his giant arms, each bunk still occupied by a sleeping soldier. We had fifteen minutes from the whistle to reveille. The washroom with the dozen basins was crowded with men waiting in line for a chance to shave in front of the mirrors. Others were running up and down the narrow wooden stairs.

I put on my drab-green army underwear, then my *arba kanfos* (Num. 15:38) and the uniform shirt and trousers. The upper floor was almost empty now. The boys knew that I shaved upstairs because I was not permitted to use a razor blade. I carried around a little arsenal of electric plugs, extension cords, and transformers to solve this problem of shaving. You never knew in the army where you were going next and so I had to be prepared for all eventualities. So far there had been no trouble. In the "tent city" at Fort Dix, on the troop train down South, and now in the infantry training center of Camp Wheeler, I had always found some electric connection where one of my plugs would fit. I put the cord of my shaver into the extra outlet I had screwed in above the light bulb next to my bunk. After a few minutes I rushed downstairs, just in time for the platoon sergeant's stentorian "Fall in!" Then came "Pany, 'ten-tion!" "Report!" On

this cold December morning in Georgia it was still dark and the stars were shining peacefully and brightly above the shivering soldiers in their heavy overcoats.

Now the men were running back into the barracks to get their messgear. On days like this I had to reverse the usual order: I ate breakfast while it was still dark and said the morning prayers afterwards. I entered the mess hall through the KP entrance. In the little storage room I picked out an orange and two raw carrots. The mess sergeant had given me the run of the space where the kitchen supplies were stacked in sacks, baskets, and bins. The company did not lose anything on the deal. A man who did not eat any meat or milk or butter, whose only cooked food was potatoes or eggs boiled in the shell whenever they happened to be on the menu, such a man—though his reasons were obscure—could have an extra can of salmon or some extra apples any day he wanted them.

Putting on my little black skull cap, I poured water over my hands and said the blessing "*Al netilas yodoyim.*" Taking the cap off, I walked quickly to my corner seat. That was also SOP: in each army mess hall I picked a corner seat, with my back to the wall. Though I could wear my little cap during the meals, it had to be done without any unnecessary attention—nobody was allowed to wear a uniform cap or helmet in any mess hall. Seated, I slid the cap on again and said the blessing, "Who bringeth bread forth from the earth."

There wasn't much time; first formation was at eight o'clock. For "us" it was always a race against time in the army. I got back to my bunk, saw to it that the sheets had the proper corners and that the blanket was flat and tight without any wrinkles. Then I covered my head with the *tallis*, said the blessing, put the prayer-shawl down over shoulders and back, took the cubicle coverings off the *t'fillin*—Otto Meyer always regarded these tiny velvet-lined coverings as "idols" I was praying to—and put the leather straps of the phylacteries around my head and left arm and hand (Deuteronomy 6: 8). I could say only part of the prayers, the remainder would be said during the lunch period. After all, I could not risk being caught in the middle of *Shemone esre* (prayer said three times daily, facing towards

Jerusalem) when the company was marching off.

WE WERE fully aware of the fact that we had to compromise continually. If there ever was an emergency permitting temporary religious adjustments, this war was it. The task was to hold infractions of religious observance to a minimum while keeping military efficiency at a maximum.

Saturday afternoons the camp was empty. Everybody, except the "charge of quarters," KP's, latrine orderlies, and the fellows in the guardhouse, took off. I had the whole battalion area for myself. I could not leave till sundown because I could neither sign nor carry my pass till then, and of course I could not have taken any money, even bus-fare, with me. Every Sunday, however, was a sort of *hol hamoed* (semi-holiday). Within commuting distance of most camps there was usually a small town that had at least one Jewish grocery store. There we feasted on smoked fish and salami and Rokeach soups. As soldiers we had no stamps for these rationed goods, but the local Jewish Welfare Board representatives usually had some extra stamps for "institutional" purposes.

Another year went by, filled to overflowing with change and experiences: The Jewish intelligence colonel who performed a Purim miracle, the joy of feeling the instant response of the controls of a Piper Cub or Taylorcraft, the reckless boys of the armored division. Then, in a different key, the STAR Center of ASTP (Army Specialized Training Program) in New York—with real *mezuzos* (Deuteronomy 6:9) on the doors of the sleeping quarters—the labyrinth of the Pentagon, the cloak and dagger corridors of the Office of Strategic Services, the staid halls of the Catholic School of Foreign Service—expressive of the desire to move the clock of history back to the pre-Protestant era.

And all this time the nagging thought, "How are you going to manage when you get overseas?"

THE troop transport SS Alexander had docked an hour ago. The quay was deserted except for a handful of dock-workers and some British MP's. Now the soldiers were coming off the gangplanks, lugging their overstuffed duffelbags on their shoul-

ders or dragging them on the ground. As if this were not enough, some of us carried an additional small wooden case.

Perspiring and near collapse, we paid little attention to the stark ruins of Liverpool's blitzed port or to the winged figure atop its tallest building. Oh, to be a civilian and call for a taxi or a porter. As it was, there weren't even any army trucks. Each of us held on doggedly to his case. This was the evening before Passover and in the precious box we had some matzos, a few cans of gefilte fish, and even a bottle of Passover wine. (The chaplains in Camp Myles Standish and Boston port of embarkation had been more than thoughtful.) With the extraordinary luck of having an Orthodox chaplain on board we probably broke the US Army record by having a *minyan* three times daily, with a few services in English thrown in for good measure.

There happened to be an unusually high percentage of Jews in this new outfit. Many of these boys, even though they were not very strict otherwise, wanted to have matzos for Passover, but there was only enough for a few. The chaplain, unfortunately, was not going to be with us any more and so I made up my mind to try to get the seasonal "bread" for all in the regiment who wanted it.

My company was billeted in Didsbury. Everything and everybody was new—officers, cadre, and men. Even the TO (table of organization) was not yet established. As a matter of fact, this was the first American division to be formed on foreign soil. Under the circumstances it looked almost impossible to interest the military hierarchy in the matzos problem.

The newly assigned company commander proved to be open-minded on the subject. (He was a Syrian and knew a little bit about "oriental" affairs.) There was nothing he could do, but he gave me permission to see the regimental adjutant. The adjutant had other worries that morning. So he was glad when I offered to attend to everything myself. Within less than an hour I had a jeep and authorization to drive within the city limits of Manchester. Before noon I had located a large supply of matzos at the local Red Cross club, where it had been deposited for just such an emergency.

I loaded the big cartons into the back of the jeep. All the other companies, I found

out, ate in Nissen huts like ours. During the next few hours I drove through Manchester, with a map of the city and a list of company locations in my lap, and left one box with each mess sergeant. There was no time for formal announcements or orderly procedure. I simply told each mess sergeant to place the box in a conspicuous place near the end of the chow line. Only those who had taken no bread were to be permitted to take matzos; otherwise there would be nothing left for those who wanted it most.

During the course of the day I had been introduced to a prominent member of the Manchester Jewish community. His wife offered to furnish me with egg, bone, herbs, and *charoses* (a special dish commemorating the period of slave-labor in Egypt), and I accepted gratefully. When I came home to my billet, a little worn out but happy, the landlady, the charming wife of a director of the municipal gas works, invited me to the family supper table. I had to express regrets that I could not accept even a cup of tea just then, during our "Easter week." I don't think the dear lady quite understood: she thought this was some quaint American custom. She also politely agreed to put out the light in my room at ten o'clock. When I finally sat down to my Seder meal, I found that only one ingredient was missing: after just spending ten days on the Atlantic Ocean I had no salt water.

LIEUTENANT Banks cursed but after a few moments he fell asleep again. His bedroll was directly in front of the jeep. I was curled in the driver's seat and in my dreams had stepped on the starter, scaring him momentarily. It was pitch dark. Even the six-by-sixes (army trucks) on the nearby Redball highway drove with blackout lights.

Tonight was the birthday of the world. Tomorrow humankind would be judged for the past, each individual's fate would be inscribed for the future. "Who shall live, and who shall die, who shall find rest, and who shall be restless. . . ."

Our convoy drove on at dawn. At the first ten-minute break I ran into the woods across a muddy field. Under my arm I clutched the *shofar* that I had brought along from England. Today the ram's horn would not be sounded the customary hundred, or even thirty, times, but the first day of Rosh Ha-

shanah was not to pass entirely without *tekiyas shofar*. So I stood under the trees and blew the traditional tunes of *tekiyo*, *shevorim*, *teruo*. Some birds stirred in the nearby bushes—I doubt that it was applause; I wasn't that good.

A few hours later we arrived at the new seat of division headquarters, in the sprawling modern castle at one end of a large, artificial lake. Companies and detachments were assigned areas in the surrounding forest-covered hills where they were to pitch their tents.

If we were to have a New Year's service for the second evening of Rosh Hashanah, immediate action was needed. I dumped my things in the newly built tent and, taking only my carbine along, went up to the castle. Near G-1 (personnel, plans, and operations) I found a desk and a few olive colored trunks with marks showing that they belonged to a chaplain. Half an hour later I found him, a tall, blond, friendly captain from the Middle West. He was a Protestant.

The message center was just being organized and field-telephone connection with the various company headquarters had not yet been established. Each company, however, had a little box at the message center which the company runners emptied at regular intervals. Through these, the companies were instructed to announce at supper that Jewish services would be held at the foot of the cascades near the castle that evening. We had twelve men at the open air services. Sergeant Berman was an excellent *hazan*. The headlights of an ambulance provided illumination. Next morning there were about twice as many participants, some of them with prayerbook and *tallis*. There was only one thing we did not have: a Sefer Torah.

Rochefort sur Ivelines, the tiny, sleepy village next to the castle grounds, was not very far from Paris. We knew that we would not move out into forward areas immediately, and so, a few days after Rosh Hashanah, the chaplain's jeep was on the way to Paris in quest of a Sefer Torah. On the trip I warned the captain that we would have to be very careful in the transport of the sacred scroll, and that if we, heaven forbid, dropped it, we would have to fast for forty days. The dignified and recently liberated gentlemen at the Consistoire Israélite were delighted when they heard of our request. We were referred to one of the smaller synagogues and there

the wife of the sexton led us to the Ark. She told me to take out the scroll. "It is not woman's privilege to hold the scroll," she said.

In the center of our castle there was a tremendous room, probably intended for use as a ballroom by the previous owners. I asked for permission to use it for Yom Kippur services but I did so hesitatingly. Suppose only a handful of men came to the services! At Kol Nidre, however, the room was crowded to capacity: two hundred officers and men were there. We had enough army prayer books to go around and everything went nicely. Next day the services started early and lasted till nightfall. The Protestant chaplain preached the sermon in the evening and in the morning; he may not have proclaimed any *hidushim* (novel rabbinical thoughts) but he touched everyone's heart.

ON THE trip back to Paris the scroll was returned but we had a new problem, so I paid a visit to the chief of Jewish chaplains in the ETO at SHAEF offices near the Champs Elysées. And Major Nadich had just what we wanted. I explained to our Protestant chaplain the meaning of *lulov* (palm branch), *hadassa* (myrtle), and *esrog* (citrus fruit). Now we needed only two more things for the Feast of Tabernacles: *aravos* (willows of the brook) to complete the four components of the harvest symbol, and a *sukkah* (Leviticus 23:39-43).

A little search along the waters around Rochefort soon produced the proper kind of willow twigs, but building the tabernacle was a little more complicated. In the first place there was the question of location; it had to be in a secluded spot so as to prevent damage to it by soldiers unaware of its purpose. On the other hand, the *sechach* (roof made of cut-off branches) could not be under any overhanging trees. Finally we found an appropriate space in some dense shrubbery near the lake. In the meantime Corporal Lester had found some doors lying around in a cellar of the castle. We picked out three large ones and a smaller one and rammed them into the soft ground at right angles. Presently we had a *sukkah* with three and a half walls and an entrance. Moreover, two of the doors had glass panels, thus giving us the additional luxury of windows. With trees all around, the *sechach* was constructed in a matter of minutes.

THE local Civil Affairs detachment of the US Army consisted of a captain, two lieutenants, and six enlisted men. Their territory coincided roughly with that of the Belgian canton of which the village of S. was the seat and center. All afternoon the tanks and half-tracks of the 7th Armored Division had rumbled south to the hard-pressed sector of St. Vith, where German Panzer formations appeared to be getting the upper hand in their attempt to break through to the Meuse. Then, toward evening, an ever-increasing flood of refugees had pressed into town from the east, led by the burgomaster of Malmédy, all good, loyal Belgians anxious not to fall into the hands of the SS. There was little we could do for them, beyond some comforting words and vague expressions of hope. Although it was not our fault, we felt very guilty: only a little while ago we had been admired by these people as liberators and now we prepared to abandon them and leave them to their fate.

They knew what was in store for them. During the afternoon I had bought some more candles because the next day would be the last day of Hanukka. When I had asked the storekeeper for the price, she burst into tears and refused to take any money. "What good is money now? Tomorrow we shall all be dead, killed by the *boches*."

For at least a week we had known that a German counter-attack was being prepared, ever since they had caught those four Nazi paratroopers in monk's clothing around Bastogne. On my own—there were never directives in matters of this kind—I had stopped giving passes to forward areas and only the day before I had searched the woods around the villa, where the people from the German-speaking borderland were quartered, for paratroopers. Now we sat in the blacked-out rooms of the Hotel de Ville, fifty yards from the bridge over the Amblève. Every half hour I called the near-by units on the field telephone. Each time one more failed to answer, either the line had been broken or they had pulled out, more likely both. It was a chaotic situation. The higher echelons refused to give explicit orders to retreat; they didn't know any more—possibly less—about the local situation than we did. In effect, each unit was left to make its own decision. For the moment we could only wait for whatever the night and fate might bring.

The eight lights and the *shammes* (auxiliary light) flickered and played strange shadows on the walls. I thought of the Hanukka two years before, when I had lit the candles in the Jewish chaplain's office with the permission of his Greek-Catholic assistant. (The chaplain had been away up north at chaplains' school.) The T/5 with the Greek name probably was unaware that these lights symbolized Israel's struggle against Hellenism, Jerusalem's fight against the spirit of Olympia.

A heavy mine explosion in the immediate neighborhood jarred the windows. Some vehicle must have run into the mine barrier on the bridge. That would probably rip out four or five yards in the center of the span. The last line of possible retreat for American elements on the other side of the water was cut off in any event. The next thing to come across would probably be a Tiger tank. At 2 AM I called the MP's, stationed at the far end of the village near the railroad station. There was no answer. So they too had taken off. That left us, three officers and six men, with nothing heavier than a carbine, against the attacking Panzer corps, as far as this locality was concerned. A few hours later, we too pulled back with the rest. The words of *Al hanissim*, the special prayer for Hanukka, tumbled poignantly through my head. ". . . Thou hast delivered the strong into the hand of the weak and the many into the hand of the few and the unclean into the hand of the clean and the evil ones into the hand of the just and the wicked ones into the hand of those who practice Thy law. . . ."

At 7 AM the Waffen SS entered the village. . . .

A few days later the houses west of the Amblève were in American hands again. But the Germans had made "good use" of their short-lived occupation. In a last convulsion of senseless mass murder they had killed civilians indiscriminately, women, old men, children. It had nothing to do with military strategy. It was just a way of staging a mad, perverse, and cruel *Goetterdaemmerung*. A few weeks later the fields and forests on the hills and ridges of the Ardennes were filled with bodies of thousands upon thousands of dead German soldiers.

In my memory there is recorded the hopeless outcry of the storekeeper who had sold me the candles, the flicker of the candles in

the darkened room that Hanukka eve, and the ever reassuring prophecy of *Al hanissim*.

Our Military Government detachment had shrunk: during the campaign across Germany and during the critical period of the first few weeks in our own district it consisted of the same six men with but one officer, a second lieutenant. I was the only one who spoke and understood German and who knew Europe, Germany, and the Nazis. So it was only natural that the lieutenant and I had come to a tacit understanding. On the one hand, I was to do most of the essential work of the detachment; on the other, I had complete freedom of action.

All this and many other official duties did not leave much time for private affairs. But on Sundays I sometimes drove to Frankfurt, in the confiscated car of the former Nazi chief of the Saar region, to see the displaced persons section of SHAEF in the I. G. Farben building. The JDC representative was still waiting in France for permission to enter Germany and, aside from some Jewish soldiers, the Jewish DP's in Germany had no official representation, such as the Allied nations supplied for their nationals, and practically no liaison with the Allied armies. German officials considered the Jews as foreigners, many army officers in the field considered them as nationals of their former country, whether this happened to be Russia, Poland, or Germany, and so the Jews were left in between, often without food or shelter, even refused admission to DP camps or mistreated by their own "co-nationals," always without official spokesmen or recognized "channels." Some of the Jewish chaplains courageously cut across red tape and regulations in order to assist these unfortunate ones, but as a rule it was up to individual Jewish soldiers in the American army to do what they could on their own initiative. Other soldiers, stationed in England, improvised a food-package program with the very efficient and generous aid of the British Chief Rabbi's Religious Emergency Council.

One of the Jewish chaplains had left me an inheritance of a group of young Jewish DP's, and it was with them that I spent most of my free time. For them I ordered rebuilt the 300-year-old local synagogue which had been converted into a stable-like dungeon by the Nazis. Most of the fourteen Jewish cem-

eteries in the district, incidentally, had been desecrated. In our own town there was a modern cemetery and an old one. The latter was, typically enough, situated in the narrow space between the outer and inner city walls, the only place where the Jews had been permitted to bury their dead during medieval times. Here the Nazis had added a special touch: they converted the Jewish graves into air-raid bunkers.

IT TOOK several months to finish the synagogue. The leading artisans were summoned to plan and complete the work. The graceful lines of benches and *al memor* (tribune in the middle of the synagogue), the fancy metal artwork of lamps and candelabra, the multicolored windows, the black and gold filigree of the ornamental fence on the women's gallery, all combined to give the new house of worship a charming and intimate beauty. The Germans could not revive the hundreds of Jews who had lived in the district; the least they could do was to assist in building this monument to their memory.

After some deliberation it was decided that the most fitting ceremony for the dedication of the new synagogue would be to hold a Bar Mitzva ceremony for Shmuel. Shmuel *hakoton* (Samuel, the little one), as we called him, was an exception to the common rule: he had never been in a concentration camp. His parents, before being led away to camp and death, had sent their two youngest children away to pose as *Volksdeutsche*. "Never speak Yiddish as long as the Nazis are in power, never forget—even for one moment—that you are Jews." Little Shmuel had done as he was told: at the ripe old age of ten he was transported to Germany to work for a farmer who treated him like another piece of cattle.

Shmuel, now fourteen years old, was happily reunited with his sister, two years his senior, and it was high time that some belated ceremony was arranged for his Bar Mitzva.

The crowd that gathered was as unusual as the occasion. There were a score or so of Polish-Jewish DP's, an "Aryan" Jew and his daughters, two half-Jews, a Christian widow whose Jewish husband had perished, and seven Americans, stationed near-by.

The *sudo* (festival dinner) did not have all the trimmings, and those who participated

were somewhat limited in their choice of gifts. There was nothing lacking, however, in the spirit, and everybody, including Shmuel, had an extremely good time. Then someone asked for the customary speech. Shmuel rose to deliver the shortest Bar Mitzva address I have ever heard, but I don't think anyone of those present will forget it. We moved from the room into the main hall of the synagogue. When we were all seated, Shmuel went up to the pulpit. He all but disappeared behind it and only the upper half of his small dark face was visible.

"Ich bet as der tatn un di mame shoyen herunter fun himel un sehen as ir sun vert bar mitzva haint un soln si wisn as main shvester un ich sin geblihn gute yiden di ganse yoren un mir vern imer asoi blaihn. (I pray that my mother and father may look down from heaven and see that their son is Bar Mitzva today, and may they know that my sister and I have remained good Jews and will always remain so.)"

BY THE end of the summer the detachment had grown again and it was much larger than ever before. There was not very much to do now but there were many officers, headed by the newly appointed lieutenant-colonel.

To the colonel, the Germans were all "krauts" and there was little difference between one who had been eight years in a concentration camp and one who had been a Nazi official. The latter, though, would usually be more welcome; at least he would know how to address an officer. And then the Nazis were much more helpful. They had the best houses in town, most of them had good liquor, they could provide nice and willing girls who could speak English very well.

The DP's, by comparison, were a no-good bunch. There was nothing one could get out of them; they always came up with demands and complaints. Small wonder then that the colonel's private secretary was a former SS girl, or that ex-SS trooper Friedrich had recently "acquired" eight cars and trucks with which he monopolized the local transport business. Friedrich got all the gasoline he needed because he was a useful man and he would organize discreet excursions into Bavaria or to Berlin which resulted in a nice profit for certain officers and in the sending of large cases, filled with very special mer-

chandise, to some address in the United States.

It was a sad state of affairs but, as it happened, quite in key with the particular Jewish season. First the beginning of the "three weeks," then the "nine days" (Jewish periods of mourning), and finally the saddest of all days, Tisha b'av. I did not mind fasting for twenty-four hours on that day and nobody—except, of course, my private cook, a French DP—would know anything about that. But there was an additional problem.

The rule not to wear leather shoes on Tisha b'av or Yom Kippur was not always easy to observe. The previous Yom Kippur in France I had found a solution by finally locating a pair of large straw slippers in a little country store opposite the ancient moat and gate of Dourdan. But I had lost my duffelbag during the battle of the Bulge and now I had to go on a shopping tour once again.

The stores were sold out. Leather shoes had been scarce in Germany for a long time and all substitutes—tennis shoes, sandals, and slippers—were snatched up as soon as they appeared on the market. Finally, with luck and persistence, I bought a pair somewhere near my size. The shoes were just what I wanted but they had one great disadvantage: they were of a bright, shining blue, about the color of the "Y" swimming pool back in New York.

I decided to stay in my office all day on Tisha b'av so that the colonel would have no chance to notice my shoes. At about 11 AM my phone rang. On the Sabbath my German secretary answered the phone for me, saying I had stepped out of the room for a moment. I had forgotten, however, to take this precaution now and I picked up the phone.

It was the colonel. "Come right down to my office and bring the statistics on DP's."

My uniform shoes were far away, in our quarters up on the hill. I wished I had brought them along, I wished I hadn't answered the phone, I wished. . . .

Anyway I had to go. If I walked quickly to his desk, maybe he wouldn't notice anything. . . .

I opened the door to his office. Unfortunately, there was a visiting officer in the room, so I had to be formal and come to attention. The colonel's first glance was towards my feet. He could not believe his eyes. Such things just didn't happen in his detach-

ment. Then, with an embarrassed glance towards the other officer.

"What's the matter with your uniform, sergeant?"

"Nothing, sir."

At the moment, it seemed impossible to explain. The colonel's face grew red.

"Since when does the army uniform include blue shoes?"

"It doesn't, sir."

The colonel made a last attempt to control himself. "Then why do you wear these circus shoes, sergeant?"

I had to answer something, but I could not see that it much mattered what I said. The colonel did not go for a thing like this, especially with a visitor present.

"There is a Jewish holiday today, sir."

Again the colonel glanced towards his guest. "I never heard of such a thing. The Jewish holidays are in September or October."

"Jerusalem was destroyed two thousand years ago."

The colonel exploded. He roared at the top of his voice: "What the hell has that got to do with your shoes?"

As I tried to formulate a simple and speedy explanation, I had visions of being "busted," court-martialed, or both.

Just then the other officer intervened. "The sergeant is right, colonel. I know what he is referring to."

For the first time I looked at the visitor, and saw that he wore the two tablets of the law on the lapel of his uniform. My sigh of relief almost lifted me out of my shoes.

MANY thousands of soldiers had similar problems in both World Wars; and now, with the draft, there is a new crop of "conscientious non-objectors." These newcomers, too, will be on their own. They will have the opportunity to serve the Law, to earn the right to live in accordance with the dictates of their conscience by exemplary performance of their military duties. In so doing they will not only earn that right but also win the respect of their fellow-soldiers.

When I left the army, nice civilian suits were hard to get and white shirts were as rare as nylons. So I decided to wear my uniform for some more weeks, and being now a civilian, I had it checked for *shatnes* (Deuteronomy 23:11). It did not contain any forbidden materials.

CEDARS OF LEBANON

TO AMERICA!

A 48er's Call to Freedom

LEOPOLD KOMPERT

THE "Völkerfrühling"—"springtime of the nations"—which seemed to have come to Europe in the spring of the "mad year" 1848 shunned the Jewish quarters. In the ancient Bohemian capital of Prague, in the old Hungarian coronation city of Pressburg, and in various other towns, anti-Jewish riots broke out as early as April, 1848, and—with brief interruptions—lasted until the middle of June. This was what the beginning of the era of revolutionary struggle brought to the Jews of Central Europe.

The *Oesterreichisches Central-Organ für Glaubensfreiheit, Cultur, Geschichte und Literatur der Juden*, published and edited by Isidor Busch and Meir Letteris, was at that time the only journal whose columns were open for a free discussion of Jewish affairs by Jewish writers. Busch was a scion of one of the first ennobled Jewish families of Austria; Letteris was a Hebrew poet and writer. First reports about the anti-Jewish disturbances appeared in the *Central-Organ* of May 6, 1848, and in this and the following issue were published the eloquent calls for emigration to America which are here republished in an English translation by Robert Warshaw. These appeals, inspired by Busch, were written by the poet Leopold Kompert (1822-86) of Münchengraetz, the masterful portrayer of the Bohemian ghettos who was

already known, though not widely read. To the first of Kompert's two articles, Busch adds a brief editorial (also republished below) outlining plans for carrying forward the movement for emigration and adding the names of some who had already declared their readiness to go—the first of many more.

THE ideas expressed in these articles struck roots in all strata of Jewish society; the tragic and bitter outcome of the struggle for political freedom in Europe, climaxing an age of oppression, gave the final impetus to thousands of Jews who, weary of Europe, saw the possibility of an immediate birth of freedom across the Atlantic. Isidor Busch himself landed in New York, January 8, 1849. He became a leading authority in viticulture, aide to General Fremont, and champion of the abolition of slavery in the Missouri State Convention. He died in St. Louis in 1898.

These articles came to my attention in the course of research for my book *In Search of Freedom: A History of American Jews from Czechoslovakia*, a documented history of the entire movement for emigration that followed on the disturbances of 1848, which will be published shortly by Edward Goldston and Son, London.—GUIDO KISCH.

I.
(May 6, 1848)

*The harvest is past, the summer is ended
And we are not saved.*—Jeremiah, 8:20.

AND we are not saved! The sun of freedom has risen for our fatherland, but for us it is only the bloody light of the North. The larks of salvation sing in the free air, but for us there is only the screeching of the storm. Shame and rage

overcome us when we think of the frightful events that recent weeks have brought upon us. Because a vulgar horde does not understand and never has understood the spirit of freedom, we must suffer. God is our witness that we have held our heads ready for every blow, that we have trembled at every frown of our tyrants great and small—until now in the hour that has brought freedom to our land we have no other desire than to flee from this freedom.

They want it no other way; let it be so. It will not be the first time that we have yielded to their will. For centuries our history has been nothing but a dumb acquiescence in every suffering laid upon us, every torture, every restriction. But shall we always acquiesce, always bow our heads? Must our necks forever be bent and our hands folded in prayer? We wish once—with the gracious permission of the “sovereign people”—to lose our patience. We wish once to say no—and get out.

To America! You who do not understand the meaning of history, find a sign in this: that four hundred years ago, when the Jews were under the heaviest of persecutions, a Genoese mariner formed in his fevered brain the idea of seeking out a new world, and could find no peace for himself until a Spanish queen, that very queen whose consort had raised up the black figures of Torquemada and his bloody Dominican torturers—until, we say, Isabella of Spain allowed her admiral to sail forth to the discovery of America. And now it is to this same America that our longing goes forth. To America!

We know all your objections, all your arguments, but these arguments are for the faint-hearted and those of little faith, not for the brave and the ready. Some ask: Can you give us no better advice than to take up the wanderer's staff and go forth with our wives and our children to a distant and strange land? Shall we forsake the soil on which we were born, which has nourished us, where we have buried our dead? Indeed, it seems to me I have already heard talk about the fleshpots of Egypt and the vapors of corruption—but I see also those who stir up the fire and take their daily bread from the flames of hatred, of prejudice, and of narrowness. Whoever finds this to his liking, by God let him stay and feed himself!

Two texts might serve us in this time. One is from Moses: “Hold firm and still.” The other is Jeremiah's: “The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.” Which of these do you choose? To hold firm and wait, wait patiently until all those who stand against us will be reconciled and appeased, until the spirit of humanity wins out? Or, since no help has come for us, to seek help for ourselves and go to America?

It seems to me that these two texts may well be joined together. Let those in our

fatherland who wish to “hold firm and still” base themselves upon the sands of the future. We shall not hinder them. Indeed, we shall give them stones with which to build. But the others, the oppressed and afflicted, the hunted and impoverished and plundered people—all those to whom “freedom” has brought evil, all whose hearts say to them: there is no more peace for us in our fatherland; we cannot change ourselves overnight and *they* cannot either; years and years are needed to achieve even the first step toward peace—to all these we say: no help has come for us, we are not saved. Seek help in faraway America.

The idea is not new, but that in itself is evidence of its practicality. Some time ago certain people tried to fix upon Rothschild the honor of having fostered this idea. He did not take up the honor. But why Rothschild? Rothschild cannot create the desire to emigrate, the need to go elsewhere; he can only support and assist. You must find your purpose without Rothschild. Then you may also find assistance if it is needed—but that is means and not purpose. Emigration, the finding of a new fatherland, the immediate winning of freedom—that is a purpose!

As for what you may do in America, it is not for me to say. What I write here is only a signal of distress, an alarm, or, if you wish, a chord of music in the confusion and distress of this time. Be farmers, merchants or craftsmen, peddlers or Congressmen, brokers or vice-presidents of the United States; be cotton planters or sugar refiners—that is your affair and does not concern us here. Nor will anyone ask you in your adopted fatherland, for there a man is worth what he is, and he is what he does. Before all else, be free—and go to America.

Thousands have taken this path before you and do so now, and few have regretted it. God will watch over you. He will lead you safe over the sea and safe through the first hardships of a new life. I have no fears for you. You of all people have the qualities and the virtues that will assure your wellbeing in America: prudence, sobriety, thrift, discipline, and solidarity. Others perhaps have failed, but you will flourish and grow—the God of Freedom will be with you.

In imagination I already greet your children—the children of those who have become free. Sholom aleichem! The greatest joy

overcomes me when I think of the freeborn children, when I think of the mothers who will give them to you.

And so—pass through the horrors of the past weeks, pass on through the ranks of those who lie in wait for you, who hunt you down and oppress you, make way for liberty!—To America!*

*Even as these lines go to press we read the following from Pesth: "As a result of the most recent disturbances there has been organized an association for emigration to the United States of North America, which, although it is made up mostly of persons of the Mosaic faith, also counts among its members many Christian professional men and technicians."

II.

(May 6, 1848, published facing the preceding article)

EMIGRATE! To America! The cry comes as with one voice from thousands among our brothers. The experiences of recent days have mightily awakened this longing for a new and better homeland, and with thousands of others we cry inwardly, "Godspeed!"

It now becomes our most immediate task to offer guidance to those who wish to emigrate, and the editors feel themselves particularly fortunate in having many good friends who have lived for years in New York, St. Louis, and New Orleans and have kept us intimately in touch with conditions.

We speak out of the conviction that emigration to America is the most fruitful general aim, both for those who will emigrate and for those who will remain behind. We shall try to clarify our position in later issues—for those who still need such clarification.

It is much more important, however, to guide and support the movement for emigration. To that end the editors intend to bring together various persons of like mind in order to form a committee to devote itself to this matter.

The merchant Mayer von Russbach has recently formed a provisional committee, supported by Herr Boehm and Herr Bauer, to collect funds for the temporary relief of the Jewish community of Pressburg which has been completely impoverished. While we honor this noble and humanitarian purpose, we must nevertheless ask: what can result from it? Nothing! Less than nothing—except to raise a delusory hope in the sufferers; it is an effort that can only bring forth again the half-dried tears instead of wiping them away.

If with a hundred of these small sums we were to send one or two young people to America, they would not only establish for themselves a happier future but would also prepare a future for their parents and their brothers and sisters who could follow them in a few years.

Besides, the cost is by no means great; each emigrant can gather together what little he possesses, and whatever his friends give him will really be given only to themselves, as a loan that will bear rich interest.

The task of this committee, however, will not be confined to providing assistance in the form of money but will extend to assisting our brothers in advice and deed both here and on the other side.

Further information will be published in later issues. THE EDITORS

EMIGRANT GROUP

(The following persons have declared themselves ready to emigrate and in most cases have renounced all claim to financial assistance.)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Homeland</i>
Carl Hellsinger	27	Merchant	Hungary
Friedrich Hoffmann	26	Engineer	Hungary
Ignaz Busch	23	Merchant	Bohemia
Falkenau	22	Merchant	Bohemia
Lazarfeld	40	Merchant	Bohemia
Hirschmann	34	Merchant	Bohemia
Pick	23	Merchant	Galicia
Kelsohn	24	Merchant	Galicia
Brillant	25	Merchant	Galicia

Ungar	21	Merchant	Galicia
Spitzstein	24	Merchant	Hungary
Kornfeld	30	Merchant	Bohemia
Gross and Wife	35	Merchant	Hungary
Esrogat and Wife	35	Merchant	Bohemia
Seefahrer	30	Pipemaker	Moravia
Kohn	42	Merchant	Moravia
Fischer	32	Merchant	Bohemia
Ragensdorfer	22	Tailor	Hungary
Robitscher	23	Housepainter	Hungary
S. Richtmann	24	Housepainter	Hungary
Schlesinger	23	Tailor	Hungary
Leop. Richtmann	18	Shoemaker	Hungary
August Grossman	19	Pipemounter	Hungary
Samuel Klein	22	Tailor	Hungary
David Bein	22	Tailor	Hungary

III.

(May 13, 1848)

IT WAS under the pressure of the moment, under the influence of the terrible experiences that have come upon us from all sides like the blows of a club, that we voiced our plea to all the hunted and beset in Israel to leave this land of servitude and sorrow and find a new home across the Atlantic. Perhaps in raising this cry we were responding instinctively to that clamor of so many afflicted souls in which the words "Away! Away!" resound urgently like the insistence of an impatient creditor. But was our response the right one? When we called for emigration, were we speaking out of a true understanding of the times? The storms and disturbances of this year have been so continuous that even the most careful calculations of the best minds cannot but be confused and unclear. Nothing is certain. Even hatred, even prejudice and narrow-mindedness cannot be sure that the Jewish question, in spite of all opposition, may not tomorrow or the next day take an unexpectedly favorable turn. Yes, even we who raise the call "To America!" retain the firm conviction that within a short time a decisive step will have been made towards our emancipation in this country.

Yet we do not hesitate a moment to repeat more strongly than ever this call: "To America!" And we do this precisely because the solution of the Jewish question is so uncertain a matter. For us, if ten thousand men can win freedom immediately by going to America it is a greater victory than that hundreds

of thousands should spend years in powerless and frustrating hope. We read often in books, in romances, and in legends of how one person to please another gives up his own freedom, allows himself to be imprisoned and hungry, weeps and sorrows with his friend; but in reality this is a sick sentimentality, if not a sin. A man who can be free commits the grossest unrighteousness when he chooses not to be free; the freedom of *one* man is a gain in which a hundred men, yes, a thousand, participate. To wish to suffer because others suffer is of no value and betrays cowardice. He who takes the initiative to win freedom does more than this—he becomes at the same time the standard bearer for a thousand others. And thus we repeat, after ripe consideration: "To America!"

But there is another and certainly not the least significant aspect of the question of emigration: namely, that it may strengthen the morale of those who stay behind, that it may give them an example to follow, not perhaps to emigrate themselves but to carry on the struggle for freedom where they are. So terrible have our circumstances been, so little improvement have we seen, that we who stay behind, bereft of our brothers, may hope that there will be advantage for us too in sending them forth to meet the privations and difficulties of a new life; even in this there may be a gain for us, the gain of *our* freedom. Or, is that not possible?

YET this side of the matter pales into insignificance when we think of those who will have truly become free. To be free without

struggle, purely through the power of one's own will—here is an emancipation that is not to be hoped for in Europe under present circumstances. To be free at one blow, without delay, without parliamentary discussion, without sympathy or antipathy, to be free at once and on the spot from the moment that the ship lifts anchor and the ocean comes between the free man and Europe! Tell this to all the people, to all the oppressed and sorrowing: that they will be free men when they set foot on the transatlantic soil, citizens of a free state; lift their souls with these tidings, comfort with these words our poor, our terribly poor Jews. Use all the powers of your speech—for the matter is in sacred earnest—use all your arts of persuasion to assure them, to strengthen them, to draw them after you and make them join in the cry that you are to repeat to them: "To America!"

They will ask you: Can one live on freedom? Tell them yes, yes, one can live! Until now in your servitude you have vegetated more than you have lived. And even this existence, degrading, galling, and monstrous as it was, moving between humility and confinement, between complete darkness and an occasional glimpse of the sun—even this has been embittered and made intolerable. You have thriven too well in this vegetation. Only in freedom will you *live*. Yes, one can live on freedom. Especially a Jew can live on freedom. How you will thrive and grow and blossom! Can one live on freedom? *Only* on freedom—it is the first element of life!

We have pointed out in earlier articles that Judaism, in which we cannot overlook the existence of unhealthy growths and tendencies, requires the fullest freedom if it is to engage in that unlimited activity in all directions which alone can bring health and prog-

ress. Say to all who turn to you that in America they will find such freedom as has been an object of longing to all Europe for almost a century. From Germany, for instance, thousands of farmers go every year across the ocean to the new world, farmers who own houses and land and who sell all they have in order to take this journey; whole villages have been emptied. These simple natures in their impulsion to seek new homes across the sea know well enough what it is they want; they know it better, indeed, than many of the heroes of freedom who have dissipated their fervor in temporizing. *They* wanted to be free, and thousands of them, if they had not turned their backs upon their "lords" and officials, their taskmasters and tax collectors, would be still in arms against them, and the Struve-Hecker uprising might well have resulted in an *essential* alteration of the proposed national constitution now being considered by the Committee of Seventeen in Frankfort.

Let our people follow the example of these German farmers. Teach them through this example what freedom is. Tell them that in America no limitation is set on any human activity provided only that it be honorable; tell them that in America the Jewish virtues of industry, prudence, sobriety, and thrift call forth no reactions of hatred and plunder; tell them that America is large enough to question the rights of no religious faith, of no organization; tell the man of the masses that he can bring with him the religion of his fathers and that he will find in America thousands with whom he can practice it, that he need have no fear that Judaism will be rootless and fragmented there; and, finally, tell him that there the *man* comes first, then religion and the state and all else.

ON THE HORIZON

"Gentleman's Agreement" Abroad

BENNO WEISER

"**H**ABLAN todo el tiempo de judíos—All they talk about is the Jews," said the man who walked out before the movie was over. I looked at the few people who were waiting for admission in the vestibule. Most of them were foreigners. It was in Caracas. This was not a first-run movie house, and the film *Gentleman's Agreement* (*La luz es para todos* in Spanish) had already had a fairly long run. Nevertheless I was struck by the lack of interest among the movie-loving *caraqueños*. Perhaps 1947's best film was not being appreciated in South America.

I myself greatly enjoyed the film; but there were moments, when the tension relaxed, which allowed me to feel somewhat bothered at seeing this film in Venezuela. I could imagine what extraordinary topical interest the theme would have in New York and in at least a large part of the United States, how a Broadway audience would absorb every word of this movie brimming with talk and discussion. The Venezuelans around me were confused, surprised, and

in fact bored. A gentle snore to my right told me that someone had fallen asleep. Others laughed at the wrong moments. The film was not being understood.

A JEWISH problem doubtless exists in Latin America as it does in the rest of the world. In Argentina—fortunately the tendency is now on the decline—it has at times taken on a European aspect, with discrimination in the universities and the civil service. Of late other countries have also gone through an anti-Semitic wave in which the Arab-Jewish conflict played a part. (Arabs, mainly Syrians and Lebanese, are fairly numerous in Latin America; and have gained considerable influence in the politics, economics, and journalism of several countries.) In other countries we find a milder form of stabilized, static anti-Semitism, together with periodic tides of xenophobia not confined to the Jews. And though, generally, the Church on this continent is not hostile to the Jews, there does exist here and there a very unpleasant sort of anti-Semitism with a clerical bias.

Discrimination in immigration policy, however, is common; sometimes it is open, sometimes hidden, sometimes it is chronic, sometimes sporadic. Even in countries that are very liberal toward the Jews already living in them, and that have expressed strong sympathy with the ideal of a Jewish homeland, discrimination is practiced in the admission of immigrants. A few states whose governments have an anti-Zionist bias have reached anti-Semitism by this route, and practice discrimination against travelers with Palestinian passports.

On the whole, however, it may be said that the official attitude toward Palestine has nothing to do with immigration policy. It is just as hard to get an immigration visa for those states that are friendly to Zionism as for those that oppose it. While one Latin-American diplomat at Lake Success was strongly supporting the Palestine partition

THIS department—which reports on cultural and social trends and events—presents this month a discussion by BENNO WEISER of the implications of a South American country's reaction to the film *Gentleman's Agreement*, a matter which has broader significance, perhaps, in view of similar doubts expressed over the showing of the film in Europe; and a survey by DAVID SCHEINERT of Jewish cultural activity in Western Europe. Mr. Weiser, formerly a well-known newspaper columnist in Ecuador, is now with the Latin American department of the Jewish Agency. Mr. Scheinert is a young Belgian critic and novelist. Mr. Weiser's article has been translated from German by Francis C. Golfing, Mr. Scheinert's from French by Irving Kristol.

plan, a countryman of his, speaking in another UN meeting on immigration problems, declared his country's willingness to accept fifty thousand DPs—but only if they professed the Catholic religion.

Thus, though it would be wide of the mark to speak of a general Latin American anti-Semitism, most countries south of the Rio Grande do discriminate in some way, even racially, against Jewish immigrants. What lies at the root of this discrimination? For the most part, it seems not to be anti-Semitism in the usual sense of the term—that is, based on an aversion to Jews—but rather to reflect specific ideas as to what constitutes desirable immigrants.

Most of the Latin American countries are underpopulated. Brazil, larger than the United States, has barely a third of its population. Countries from two to four times as large as Germany or France have only from a sixth to a tenth of their population. This discrepancy is not noticeable in the cities, some of which are larger than many European cities, but it becomes quite evident in the provinces, especially to those who travel by plane: one flies along certain routes for hours without seeing the least sign of human habitation. For this reason these countries look first of all for agricultural immigrants. They neither want nor need further growth in the centers of population. Furthermore, they want a rapidly assimilable type of immigrant, who will aid in the demographic growth of the nation.

Jewish immigration happens not to answer either of these requirements. Not that the Jews are the only ones who fail to measure up. Indeed so far none of these countries has succeeded in obtaining a large agricultural immigration. It may be partly because the farmer clings to his native soil more tenaciously than others. In some countries Jewish farmers have tried to colonize, but they have been defeated nearly everywhere by colonial conditions, which make agriculture profitable only for the big landowner whose relationship to the peon is not simply that of employer to employee, but also of overlord to serf.

In any case, Latin American officials take it for granted that Jewish immigrants are either unwilling to engage in agriculture or unqualified for it. Nor is it possible to shake this conviction by pointing to the work of

colonization in Palestine. A South American foreign minister said to me once: "What the Jews have achieved in Palestine is magnificent. I have seen it with my own eyes. But Palestine is the only country in the world whose soil the Jews truly love."

NO ONE could deny that Jewish immigrants have contributed much to the development of South American cities. Shortly before his election to the presidency of Ecuador, Galo Plaza Lasso said: "When I show my mother, who has been living all these years in the United States, our Quito as it is today, I'll point out to her all the signs of progress and say, 'This is the work of the Jewish immigrants.'" And yet Plaza is opposed to any further large-scale Jewish immigration. Specifically Jewish trades, such as retail clothing, furs, and fabrics, have reached the saturation point everywhere. In many cities one may walk along streets lined with yard-goods stores. It isn't that native merchants have been squeezed out: certain branches of trade in Latin America are virtually foreign monopolies, parcelled out among Syrio-Lebanese, Italians, Spaniards, Germans, and Jews. But while Latin American politicians like to buy in Jewish stores, they will nevertheless vote for any measure limiting their further increase.

What is even more disturbing to the generally mild local nationalism is the unwillingness or inability of the Jewish immigrants to assimilate themselves. And what is lacking here, in actual fact, is not so much the ability as the desire. This becomes very clear if we examine the group that arrived just ahead of the mass influx under Hitler. In this group mixed marriages are by no means rare and linguistic adaptation is well advanced. The Semitic "type," if one may speak of it as such, becomes easily indistinguishable from the various Latin racial conglomerates, a large number of which contain Sephardic elements. Even the East European Jew assimilates very easily, in contrast to the great difficulties he has experienced in English and German-speaking countries: somehow the Spanish language does not lend itself to "typical" Jewish inflections.

Had it not been for the new wave of immigration that started in 1933, assimilation would by now have been very far

advanced, as can be seen in Argentina, Chile, and Venezuela. Mixed marriages—that is, marriages between Jewish men and native women—work well on the whole, though they can hardly be regarded as acts of deliberate intention. In most such cases marriage has come after a common-law relationship and the birth of children. The native wives typically come from the lower social strata, not because middle-class women are inaccessible, but because the men driven to such relationships by loneliness have in the beginning no thought of marriage, and therefore take the path of least resistance.

With the increase of Jewish immigration this pattern of marriage disappeared. And for a variety of reasons the new immigrants had no great desire to assimilate. The Polish and Rumanian immigrants who came between 1930 and 1938 had no intention of remaining in the country. They wished to make a few thousand dollars and return to their homes as *gevirim*; the German-speaking immigrants, who began to come in 1933, and were followed in 1938 by Austrians and Czechs, at first had hopes of going back, and later thought of moving on. Moreover, Europeans tend to think of assimilation to Latin America as assimilation to a lower cultural standard. Wherever the standard was roughly equal to the European, as in Argentina, the willingness to assimilate increased. It is possible, also, that assimilationist tendencies might have increased if the idea of an independent Jewish state in Palestine had proven illusory.

WHATEVER the reasons, the results of Jewish immigration have not been those desired by Latin American statesmen, who have not forgotten Sarmiento's saying, "*Gobernar es poblar*—to govern is to populate," but who see no way of putting it into effect. To reiterate, the Jewish problem in South America remains primarily an immigration problem. To the degree that real anti-Semitism exists in Latin America—and it comes and goes here as elsewhere, and is liable on occasion to become dangerous—it tends to be without a real basis in social practice. Discrimination of the sort exposed in *Gentleman's Agreement* simply does not exist south of the Rio Grande.

It must be for this reason that the film

finds little response. And this may be just as well, for those who do understand the film are unfortunately liable to be disabused of a myth which, on this Southern continent, has worked paradoxically enough very much to the advantage of the Jews. One residue of Nazi propaganda here is a widespread belief that the United States and Jewry are identical. It is by no means uncommon to hear intelligent and well-educated people ask such questions at this: "Why doesn't the United States take a firmer stand in its policy toward Israel, since Truman is a Jew?" So while the "Yankees" are by no means popular in these countries, "Yankee" power has reflected a certain amount of prestige onto the Jews.

I remember a colleague of mine in an Ecuadorian newspaper office who believed for years that only fascists could be anti-Semites. And when he returned from a visit to the United States he showed not only surprise, but a slight contamination. He had been refused a room in a certain hotel because one member of his party was a Jew. He had discovered that anti-Semitism is not a Nazi monopoly. The groundwork had been laid for an incipient superiority feeling.

I myself had a notable opportunity to gauge the force of the myth that equates the United States and Jewry, when in 1945 I interviewed General Perón in Argentina. Perón made his first statements about the Jews and Palestine in a discussion which covered general political questions. He later regretted his frankness and I was asked to forget that the interview had taken place. But he attached importance to one point: that his pro-Jewish statements should be given the greatest possible publicity. This happened at a moment when Argentina was very interested in bringing about a favorable shift of American public opinion.

Happily, Latin America is still a long way from the "gentleman's agreement." I only hope that the film completes its run without effecting *en masse* the same revelation that my Ecuadorian colleague's visit to America effected individually. True racial discrimination is still inconceivable in these countries which give themselves somewhat proudly the name of Indo-America. In this regard, the Latin Americans are fortunately still a backward people.

Jewish Culture in Western Europe

DAVID SCHEINERT

WHAT is the situation of Jewish culture in Europe since the war? To begin with, its center, which for decades was in Eastern Europe, has been displaced: it is in the countries of Western Europe that it is struggling to come back to life. But after a liberation that turned out differently from what was hoped (yet which grants the Jews the free expression of their bereavement), material difficulties and the need to bring order to one's ideas, to classify events and amass documents and testimony, created a climate not very propitious—especially in Jewish milieux—for the growth of disinterested ideas. The collective source was exhausted by the enfeeblement and atomization of the Jewish communities. People seemed sluggish and sleepy; there was no sign of activity. Little by little, however, the elements in the new situation took on some order. One got used to one's losses, and suppressed spiritual needs began to free themselves and seek out new perspectives.

I WILL discuss some aspects of the modest renaissance of Jewish culture in Western Europe because it is there, and especially in France, that there seems to survive the ultimate determination not to abdicate. In Holland and Switzerland, as well as France, there are noteworthy signs of effort. With regard to Belgium, there is not much to say: the numerical weakness of the indigenous Jews, their suspicion of anything that looks like material or intellectual autonomy, the existence of clans whose only ambition is to believe themselves the navel of the universe, the transient character of the Jewish refugees living there, the instability, incompetence, and even occasional dishonesty of the professional leaders—these are the factors that have hindered any cultural endeavor. *La Revue Juive de Belgique*—which I founded in 1945 out of my own pocket and which was forced to cease publication after one year for lack of funds—is only one exception that proves the law of general inertia.

It is, however, in Belgium that I came to know four men remarkable in different re-

spects: Professor Samé Katzenellenbogen—deceased after the war—who taught Hebrew at the Institut des Hautes Etudes, who did so much for Hebrew culture, and whose Slavic accent I shall never forget, as well as his careless appearance and exuberant good nature extinguished forever by the German occupation. Rabbi David Berman, in striking contrast, small, timid, dressed in black, his beard carefully trimmed, a sort of combination of liberal rabbi and Protestant pastor, timidly existing within the interior of Judaism but battling outside for a God without reproach, and who found a strange death in 1947. Izak Prins, Dutchman, a creature at once Hoffmannesque, Rabelaisian, and Shakespearean, pious and racy, a formidably erudite archivist as much interested in patronymics and oaths as in Jewish peddlers; he has bequeathed to Palestine, where he now lives, the mass of precious documents that he collected in Europe. And finally, my friend Siegfried Van Praag, a Dutchman who lives in Brussels, and whose creative ability marks him as one of the great European Jewish writers. If he has made no gaudy innovations in literary technique, he has in many works given a unified vision of the Jewish people that brings him near to a Zangwill or a Franzos. That which sets him apart from them is that he has tried, successfully, to present in his work not so much the exoticism of the Jews—transforming them into inhabitants of a menagerie—as their humanity impregnated with their inhuman condition. His interest has been directed also toward the carnal underside of life—a rare phenomenon in a Jewish writer.

The figure of Van Praag supplies a natural excuse for me to turn to Holland, where all his books have appeared. His article on Dutch Jewry published in the October issue of *COMMENTARY* expresses, better than I could hope to, the prevailing nostalgia for the peaceful prosperity of the yishuv in Holland with its intense cultural life, and the sorrow at the ravages of Nazism. The Jews of this small country, greatly reduced in numbers, have nevertheless drawn from their impressive and always vivacious traditions, their instinct for efficiency and coordination, the means to rebuild in miniature that which was destroyed on a large scale. The results demand respect: a Jewish publishing house (Joachimsthal); a weekly

magazine of Zionist tendency and some intellectual worth (*De Nieuw Israelitisch Weekblad*); another that is more strictly political (*De Joodsche Wachter*); a *Revue Mensuelle pour l'Histoire des Juifs de Hollande* directed by Jaap Meyer; some writers, especially those of the older generation who are still productive, and above whom stands out, as I have said, Van Praag, who deserves to be known beyond the borders of the Low Countries.

When one turns to Swiss Judaism, one thinks immediately of Josué Jéhouda with his curious penchant for a rootless propheticism, and who has tenaciously kept alive in Geneva, for many years and under difficult conditions, a *Revue Juive* which, despite its flagrant inadequacies, keeps the Jewish note vibrating. This review suffers from a spiritual incontinence. It is the center of a group of men who would like to diffuse a stream of temperate love: the malady of *tolérantisme*, a congenital weakness which is not, alas, contagious. Among those affected by it are Jéhouda and his pious partisans, and, in France, the old Parisian, Edmond Fleg, and the young Marseillais, Emmanuel Eydoux. It is comforting to acknowledge, on the other hand, that on the edge of this mainstream, but showing up boldly in the *Revue Juive* in the little space allotted to it, there can be found more vigorous ideas. There is perhaps something symbolic in the fact that the son of Josué Jéhouda, Daniel, seems to separate himself from the paternal doctrine and turns, not to mirages, but to a reality which demands more and gives more in return. Josué Jéhouda also directs, at Editions de la Baconnière, a collection, "Israel et le Monde." It is an Israel high in the clouds and far from the world, far from an authentic propheticism with its violence and thick rasping breath.

Among the youth, there is only one name to mention, that of Jean Starobinski, who has distinguished himself by an essay on Kafka.

EACH country seems to have marked the Judaism that inhabited it with its own characteristics. Little or no support for culture in Belgium. A sense of organization from which there is not always absent a certain timidity in Holland. A facile ideal-

ism, occasionally a bit hypocritical, in Switzerland.

In France, Jewish culture is marked by diversity, audacity, and disorder. It is a little-known culture, born at the end of the 19th century. Of the old guard, there are few who are still producing. Edmond Fleg, badly wounded during the war as a man, has not, as a thinker, renounced his optimism or regretted his tolerance. He pursues serenely his neo-biblicism, less defeatist than the neo-Christianity of Sholem Asch. The octogenarian André Spire writes little, but his ardor is not dead, and his *Poèmes Juifs* are not forgotten. Albert Cohen, an extraordinary writer, is in London, and has not published anything since *Mangelous*, which appeared before the war. Henri Hertz, companion of Apollinaire and Max Jacob, has detached himself from his precious funambulistic poetry, his disenchanted unrealism, and has turned to the writing of essays that are distinctly "*engagé*." Armand Lunel, novelist of the Jews of Provence, has abandoned them. Finbert continues to seek in nomadism the true vocation of Israel, the purification of man through contact with the flock and the absolute. His Semites are more often Arabs than Jews, and are real enough. There is in his work more pure air, earth, plants, and animals than can be generally found in Jewish books, in which life simmers between four walls. Milbauer, the poet of the tormented mask and the jeering remark, published his latest collection of French verse in Palestine—*Chants Orbes*: the suffering of mankind, which he makes his own; solitude imprisoned in the heart of this solidarity like a bitter pit; a tired irony.

The younger generation does not give cause to forget the older. True, it is full of promise, but the fruits are small. It seems poorer in sap than its predecessor. No violent or mature work, no flash of lightning, no vast enterprise, no grandiose intentions. Arnold Mandel has written an acidly lucid essay on psychology, and a very thin collection of bitter prose poems that I find a little bare. Rabinovitch, up to now, has published only some essays in which he reveals the instability of so many young Jewish intellectuals of the Diaspora with a sincerity that, in contrast to Mandel's, seems weak-boned. Emmanuel Eydoux, whose name I have already mentioned, poses religious

problems for himself and attempts to solve them in a Biblical atmosphere even simpler than that of Fleg's, but, to my mind, just as unusable. His style lacks neither breath nor grandeur, but it is white and without blood-cells; literary themes, like others, cannot live only on (divine) love and fresh air. Léon Aréga has written a book, *Comme Si C'était Fini*, on the life of a Jewish prisoner of war in German prison camps, and his escapes. It is the story of a man twice defeated (as Jew and as Frenchman), and the style, despite its dryness, is effective. In his writing, as in Mandel's and Rabinovitch's, there is something spiritless, without hope, like the lines of a prison. Is this the legacy of Kafka (who also seems to be fermenting in the work of Camus)?

The magazines are born and die; objective conditions are unfavorable, and financial support is lacking. *Hillel*, journal of the World Union of Jewish Students, has published some interesting studies. There is also: *Aleph*, of which only one number has appeared, devoted to justice and charity; and two weeklies, *La Riposte*, organ of the Hebrew Movement for Liberation, and *La Terre Retrouvée*, which reflects the thinking of the Jewish Agency. While the first defends the national integrity with unblemished violence, the second continues in the rather sterile tradition of practical Zionism. There are a few other journals of little importance.

A publishing house, Editions du Chant Nouveau, has published a series of instructive, and sometimes edifying, books. Editions de la Terre Retrouvée specializes in the publication of works more particularly Zionist, a few of them worthwhile. A troupe of young comedians, "Les Compagnons de l'Arche," has given several performances—notably *The Dybbuk* and *La Colline de la Vie* (*Tel-Hai*)—which earned a quick success; plenty of good intentions, but nothing new.

THE postwar years do not appear to have set free in Europe any genius, any master or guide. There is no spiritual movement of importance; no group or prophet to gather the mass behind them. No new Hasidism, no new Haskalah. No Borochof, Gordon, or Jabotinsky. The people have been decimated. The young are undecided or carried away by the will to act, are drawn toward an immediate goal or do not know which path to choose. However, all fermentation is not dead, and if a cultural upsurge that would seize the mass of Jews is impossible—because the mass does not exist and those who remain want to get out—nevertheless I believe in the possible, and not too distant, birth of some solitary figure who, like Kafka for example, will hurl across the universe the Jewish Word, whose echo will make itself heard after a passage of time.

THE STUDY OF MAN

FOOD OR FAMINE?

Ecology and Politics

JAMES RORTY

IS IT possible to determine, with even a rough approximation of accuracy, the position of contemporary man in the muddy turbulence of half-understood forces that shape his environment—that shifting complex of soil and water, plant, animal, and mineral wealth, human use and misuse? And if it were, could modern man, as a political animal, do anything effective to construct a stable equilibrium between himself and nature?

At one point in *Civilization On Trial*, Professor Arnold J. Toynbee seems about to answer our first question. But when one reads his chapter on "The Present Point in History," one finds little more than the warning that we probably know as little about where we are, in time and in space, as past generations did. Consider, for example, the complacent Londoners who witnessed the parade of the Empire's magnificent colonial troops at Queen Victoria's Jubilee in 1897. "Few in the English crowd," writes Toynbee, "were in the mood of Kipling's

IN RECENT months the ancient fear that man is outstripping the natural resources of the globe, and must face lower standards of living or starvation, has again been voiced in many quarters. The study devoted to the balance between man and nature is called ecology: and it is to recent manifestations and developments in this field that JAMES RORTY here devotes himself, in an effort to indicate where man stands today in relation to nature. Mr. Rorty's most recent book, written in collaboration with Dr. N. Philip Norman, is *Tomorrow's Food* (1947). He is also the author of *His Master's Voice*, *Where Life is Better*, several volumes of poetry, and many magazine articles. He was born in Middletown, New York, in 1890, and now lives in Norris, Tennessee.

'Recessional.' They saw their sun standing at its zenith and assumed it was there to stay."

Today it would be hard to find a similar complacency anywhere in the world. Instead, the season is loud with the chant of Cassandras proclaiming that civilization is doomed.

WILLIAM VOGT, author of the Book-of-the-Month Club selection, *Road to Survival* (Duell, Sloane & Pearce), names two horses in his particular apocalypse—Erosion, in tandem with Feckless Fecundity (now loose in lands already overcrowded). Mankind, he thinks, has "backed itself into an ecological trap." America cannot go on mining its soils to fill the hungry mouths of irresponsibly spawning Greeks and other ERP beneficiaries; let them practice birth control, or else. Even Americans, he asserts, are too numerous.

"These two curves—of population and the means of survival—have long since crossed. Ever more rapidly they are drawing apart. . . . The crumbling ruins of two wars mark their passing. The swollen bellies of hungry babies, from San Salvador to Bengal, dot the space between them. Parching fevers and racking coughs, from Osorno to Seoul, cry aloud the cleavage between these curves. . . .

"So that the people shall not delude themselves, find further frustration through quack nostrums, fight their way into blind alleys, it is imperative that this worldwide dilemma be made known to all mankind. The human race is caught in a situation as concrete as a pair of shoes two sizes too small. We must understand that, and stop blaming economic systems, the weather, bad luck, or callous saints. . . ."

So warns Vogt, in grim accents oddly reminiscent of the early Technocrats.

Unfortunately, the number of qualified soil scientists equipped to appraise Vogt's performance is rather small, so it is not surprising that the lay reviewers were without exception literally panicked by the book. But some weeks later, in the November 22 issue of *Time*, Vogt's technical critics had their day in a five-page rebuttal of his neo-Malthusian thesis; later his defenders were heard from, including some conservationists and agricultural scientists of high standing.

Regardless of the merits or defects of *Road to Survival*, the controversy has been useful in introducing the word "ecology" into the language of popular discussion; this at a moment when man's relationship to the natural environment is admittedly precarious and when it is increasingly recognized that many of our most critical problems are essentially ecological, and can be dealt with only by a synthesis of the natural and social sciences.

COINED originally by Haeckel, the term ecology was applied first to the inter-relationships of plant life, then to plants and animals in the sub-human life range, and more recently to the complex landscape of man-in-nature—the cultural landscape. Since there are comparatively few virgin landscapes left in the world, we must be more and more concerned with problems of human ecology, in the sense that man, and especially man's technology, are factors in the ecological situation.

Vogt, like other contemporary neo-Malthusian writers, uses the word ecology to embrace the entire complex of forces that weave the seamless web of nature, including man, man's technology, man's folkways, and man's politics, in the broadest sense. The human ecologists who appeared on the scene in the early 1920's, led by professor Robert A. Park of the University of Chicago, have provided good warrant for this comprehensive use of the term.

"Human ecology," writes Amos H. Hawley, a member of Park's group, in the May 1944 issue of *Social Forces*, "is the descriptive study of the adjustment of human beings to the conditions of their respective physical environments." An even broader and more provocative definition appears in *The Science of Life* by H. G. Wells, Julian Huxley, and G. P. Wells. "Ecology," they write, "is an extension of economics to the whole of life." To which, by way of sideswiping the classical economists, they add: "[Economics] might have been a better

and a brighter science if it had begun biologically." Park's phrase—"a society based on a biotic rather than a cultural base"—conveys the same idea.

"Human beings," writes H. A. Morgan, "respond to environment like all other life units of creation. The ecologist's task is to determine man's place—always changing because man and the forces at his disposal are constantly changing—in the living, shifting matrix of nature, including the bugs, the animals, the plants, the earth, and air and water. Man changes, but he can't step out of the picture, although man's works change the picture in innumerable ways, sometimes to his advantage, sometimes to his disadvantage. If man is to survive he has to know which and stop blundering about." (From the manuscript of a book in preparation.)

An important concept of ecology is "carrying-capacity": the kinds, qualities, and quantities of plant, animal, and human life that a given landscape will support. Vogt employs this concept in his formula: C equals B over E. In this equation C stands for "carrying capacity," B for "biotic potential," that is to say the productive life-force inherent in the soil-plant-animal complex of a particular system, and E for "environmental resistance," or the forces operating to suppress or limit the expression of the biotic potential. All these concepts are well illustrated by Charles Darwin's description of the web of life found in an English meadow.

In the field near his home Darwin found that the humblebees were almost indispensable to the fertilization of heartsease and red clover, two components of the "biotic potential" of the pasture. Humblebees alone visit the red clover, as other bees cannot reach the nectar. The inference is that if the humblebees became extinct or very rare in England, the heartsease and red clover would become very rare, or wholly disappear. However, the number of humblebees in any district depends in great measure on the number of field mice, which destroy their combs and nests—the field mice figuring as the "environmental resistance" limiting the multiplication of the humblebees. But near villages and small towns the nests of the humblebees are more numerous than elsewhere and this is attributed to the number of cats that destroy the mice. Thus next year's crop of purple clover in certain parts of England depends on the number of humblebees in the district; the number of humblebees depends

upon the number of field mice, the number of field mice upon the number and enterprise of the cats, and the number of cats—as some one has added as a gloss to Darwin's ecological parable—depends upon the number of old maids in neighboring villages who keep cats.

To complete the picture in terms of human ecology one must bring in the farmer who owns the meadow. Presumably he approves of the cats that eat the mice that destroy the nests of the humblebees; their "competitive cooperation" helps to increase the carrying capacity of his field. But a good many other things are involved. To enumerate them is to identify the major factors in the ecological approach to the survival problem of modern societies.

In the first place, the farmer knows that there is no such thing as a fixed "biotic potential" in any landscape, once it is occupied and used by human beings. The amount of forage produced by that meadow and the number of cattle or sheep it will support depends upon its fertility. This can be reduced by over grazing and neglect. Or it can be greatly increased—often to a level far surpassing its virgin state—by applications of lime, phosphate, and potash.

But has the farmer the capital required to buy these plant nutrients? Will the government or the universities provide him with technical instruction and guidance in their use? Here economic and cultural factors enter the ecological picture.

WHAT is meant by the term "environmental resistance" as applied to this *human* landscape, in which man and his tools are the dynamic factors? Would the operations of the international phosphate cartel that fixed prices and allocated markets before the war be considered part of the "environmental resistance" affecting the "biotic potential" of that British meadow?

Our problem varies with the geographic dimensions, the economic and political boundaries, of the ecology we are considering. Obviously biotic potential is one thing if we assume a world in which science and technology and critical exhaustible resources such as phosphate and potash ores are freely applied to increasing the production of the available land, and to bringing new land into production. But a world of economic autarchies, trade barriers, and cold or hot war is another and lesser thing as far as its biotic potential is concerned.

And the ecological problem varies again de-

pending on our time perspective. The biotic potential of a given acreage is one thing today, another tomorrow, depending upon the multiplying applications of the work of plant breeders, agronomists, chemical engineers. Conservation farming and sustained-yield forestry become practicable when farmers and woodlot owners can get forty-year mortgages at low interest rates; otherwise they may find themselves caught in an "ecological trap" that forces them to destroy the future biotic potential of their land in order to make a temporary living.

Equally important are cultural values, folkways, food habits, the effect of advancing living standards on the birthrate. All these and many other factors enter into any attempt to estimate the carrying capacity of the planet and balance it against the tendency of populations in *some* countries to breed faster than they can feed themselves with the agricultural resources at their disposal.

Hence the current controversy between the neo-Malthusians and their opponents could go on forever, generating more heat than light. The only sensible answer to the question of whether the earth can support mankind is "It depends."

FOR example, America: by applying his C=B:E formula to the American land, Vogt estimates that its true carrying capacity, *if* we stopped mining our soils, would be not our present 143,000,000 people, but about 100,000,000. Few soil scientists would agree with this startlingly pessimistic estimate.

But Vogt is not a soil scientist. He is an ornithologist by training, and the former editor of *Bird Lore*. Perhaps for this reason his ecology tends to be distinctly primitive. When things get too crowded man should move over and make room for the grouse and the ducks. People who perversely settle on flood plains are "ecological incompetents." The various categories of land have their strictly limited biotic potentials, says Vogt: "We cannot force land into the pattern we wish to impose upon it," he writes, "but must fit the use to the land, its capabilities and its limits."

This is true enough as far as it goes. But compare the following, by Edward H. Graham, Chief of the Biology Division of the Soil Conservation Service: "Some day, in every country, planned programs may determine the pattern of land use, and then not only crops and tame animals, but indirectly the occurrence of all

living things will be determined by man's conscious planning and use of the land. It is conceivable that at least so far as the larger land forms are concerned, the majority of wild plants and animals may cease to be, except as living museum pieces in refuges or wilderness areas. . . . Man is independent of his environment to the extent that he can modify it" (*Natural Principles of Land Use*, Oxford, 1948).

Another expert who has done a good deal both to deflate the neo-Malthusians and to distinguish the physical and biological dimensions of the world's feeding problem from its cultural and political aspects is Charles E. Kellogg, Chief of the Division of Soil Survey of the United States Department of Agriculture. Given the will to use it, the world does not lack land, Kellogg points out. By extending our agriculture into the cool temperate areas of North America and northern Eurasia, we could bring into use three hundred million acres of new arable land. In addition, there are the barely touched soils of tropical Africa, South America, Central America, Southeastern Asia, and the Pacific Islands. If only twenty per cent of these soils were brought into cultivation, a billion acres might be added—if we need them. We probably would not need them—not all of them at least—if we achieved the 20-per-cent average increase in the production of land already under cultivation that USDA experts consider entirely practicable.

Modern science has not only greatly increased the efficiency of our agriculture, but continues to do so at an accelerated rate. Between 1800 and 1940 the number of man-hours required to produce 100 bushels of wheat dropped from 373 to 47. New corn hybrids developed for the South recently boosted yields from 22 bushels to 125 bushels per acre. In 1820 one farm worker supported about 4.5 other people; by 1946 this figure reached 14.5.

By adding the production of potential new land and the increases demonstrably possible on land now being farmed, Kellogg concludes that the food needs of the estimated world population in 1960 could readily be met. But immediately he is obliged to qualify.

"Such estimates," he writes, "are very optimistic in one sense and probably still too low in another. They indicate what *could* be done with present knowledge if the political and economic barriers to effective soil use were somehow removed. At the moment this 'if'

may seem to call for miracles of education and statesmanship that few expect" (Address to the American Farm Economic Association, September, 1948).

THE optimum miracle—in fact the ultimately indispensable miracle—is a world government that will make possible the operation of the planet as an ecological unit. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations is in fact almost obliged by the terms of its charter to dream of such a miracle. Meanwhile, however, it can and does perform a useful function by making itself a kind of world center for ecological hopes and headaches.

Currently the FAO is attempting to increase the world production of fertilizers and rationalize their distribution among its member countries. Its fertilizer targets for 1960 require quadrupling our present production of nitrogen and more than doubling our production of phosphate and potash.

The nitrogen problem is relatively easy since nitrogen is a renewable resource. It can be synthesized from air either in factories or by the bacteria of legume cover crops.

The true bottlenecks are phosphate and potash, especially phosphate, which is the key mineral in most agricultural production. The principal phosphate reserves of the world are in the United States, Soviet Russia, and North Africa, with relatively small deposits scattered in a few islands of the Pacific and elsewhere. Before the war, Japan's intensive agriculture was largely dependent upon imported phosphate; within a few months of Pearl Harbor, Japanese freighters were still moving through the Panama Canal, laden with Florida phosphate. With the outbreak of war, the Japanese took over the British-mandated phosphate islands of Nauru and Ocean Island, thereby cutting the ecological life lines of New Zealand and Australia, whose wheat ranchers and dairy-men have long been dependent upon phosphate. Promptly American bombers wrecked the phosphate installations on both islands. Now the British and their Dominion partners are painfully restoring them while we keep the Japanese alive by heavy shipments of Montana phosphate.

Our Western phosphate deposits constitute nearly a third of the world total. They will have to be drawn on heavily if we are to make any serious attempt to modernize the agricultural economy of China and feed adequately, for the first time in history, its huge and ex-

panding population. But perhaps Russia will relieve us of that responsibility; she too has the required phosphate.

India, too, needs phosphate for her deficient soils, as well as a major revision of her unecological folkways. The Indian population problem will scarcely be solved while the land is burdened by sacred but relatively unproductive cattle—whose phosphate-rich bones, when they die, are shipped out of the country.

These are just a few of the ecological problems that the fertilizer committee of the FAO has to worry about. Our advancing fertilizer science and technology will help by developing more concentrated and efficient fertilizers. To that end, a half dozen Agricultural Experiment Stations are conducting highly important investigations utilizing radioisotopes of phosphorus, supplied by the Atomic Energy Commission. But here, as elsewhere, the chief limiting factor is political. Russia, with a third of the phosphate deposits of the world, is not a member of the FAO, nor is the work of her soil scientists available to the rest of the world.

THE word "ecology" has rarely been used in connection with the Tennessee Valley Authority. Yet in effect the TVA is a large-scale experiment in applied ecology—perhaps the first in history; certainly the first since the impact of the industrial technology on the natural environment began to pose critical ecological problems for modern man. This is better understood abroad than in this country; in fact it is TVA's significance and value as an ecological demonstration that constitute its uniqueness in the eyes of foreign visitors. For more than a decade we have been hearing of projected TVA's for Palestine, the Danube basin, the Yangtze, the Damodar in India, the Tigris-Euphrates watershed—all areas where complex and baffling political problems are rooted in population pressures and problems of resource development and utilization.

In 1933, when the TVA Act was passed, the Tennessee Valley exhibited a fairly complete collection of ecological problems, many of them acute. Largely through the influence of H. A. Morgan, the biologist member of the original TVA triumvirate, the ecological approach was more or less consciously embodied in TVA policies and programs from the beginning. Multi-purpose dams were built to regulate the flow of the river, harness its power, and provide slack-water transportation from Paducah to

Knoxville. Hydro-electric power was used to process the phosphate ores of Middle Tennessee. The experimental phosphates produced at Muscle Shoals were used to spark the growth of protective and productive cover crops and forage on eroding hill farms.

In addition to making available phosphate, the key soil mineral, TVA's low-cost power created opportunities for new industries. They processed locally the raw materials that had formerly been shipped North in the traditional pattern of an exploited colonial economy. Gradually, the increased full-time and part-time employment provided by these industries took some of the pressure of the high regional birth-rate off the land. At the same time, agronomic reforms were building up the fertility of the soil, increasing the man-hour productivity of the farms, and introducing some badly needed animal proteins into the unbalanced carbohydrate diet of the people. Sustained-yield forestry practices and new wood-using industries, fostered by the TVA, increased the income from farm woodlots.

Where economic and technical bottlenecks appeared, the TVA attempted to break them, sometimes with notable success. TVA research facilitated the expansion of the quick-freezing and locker-plant industries, now prospering throughout the Valley. TVA agricultural engineers developed and demonstrated a practical barn haydrier that facilitated the ecologically required shift of land use from row crops to grass. Cheap water transport of grain from the Middle West accelerated this shift.

ALMOST to the degree that TVA's regional ecological demonstration succeeded, there developed a corresponding resistance on the part of the political environment, especially outside the Valley. To this resistance, the conflicting vested interests of big business and big government have both contributed.

Big business—specifically the private-power lobby—saw itself increasingly challenged by TVA's low power rate and the war-fostered expansion of its system, and by the agitation for the establishment of similar authorities for the Missouri and Columbia watersheds. But since low-cost electric power is the life's blood of the emergent regional economy, the expansion of the TVA system has been vigorously supported by the local power boards and Chambers of Commerce of the Tennessee Valley.

Although TVA's activities expand the market

and increase the sales of commercial fertilizer, the fertilizer industry distrusts government even when it comes bearing gifts. It has opposed the expansion of TVA's experimental fertilizer production. It has also opposed the national extension of the fertilizer "test demonstration" program proposed in the National Soil Fertilizer Bill, which was supported by the Farm Bureau and the Farmers Union.

Big government opposition to TVA's ecological demonstration has arisen from the fact that various TVA programs have inevitably cut across the administrative lines of federal "action" agencies, especially in the crowded spectrum of aid to the farmer. That federal and regional conservation programs can be harmoniously coordinated has been proved in the case of the wild life and forest services, but there has been a conflict of long standing between TVA and the Soil Conservation Service.

The SCS has its own ecological philosophy and program, its own mandated powers and responsibilities, which are national in scope, and its own teams of technically competent and hard-driving conservationists. On the one hand, the SCS has insisted that TVA's test demonstration program has not been adequate to the conservation needs of the Valley. On the other, the SCS has not been willing to modify its standard procedures and gear its activities into the established test demonstration program conducted jointly by the TVA and the Extension Service. What makes the TVA-SCS controversy so critical is its relation to the projected extension of the TVA idea to the Missouri, Columbia, and other watersheds. Until the protection of its jurisdictional rights is assured, the SCS has intimated that it will oppose the creation of other regional authorities. Obviously this is the language of inter-bureau pressure politics, rather than ecology.

The root cause of this conflict has been well analyzed by Dr. Charles M. Hardin of the political science staff of the University of Chicago. Dr. Hardin has pointed out that there is a categorical difference between the "organic" approach of the TVA to ecological problems and the "pluralistic" approach of the USDA and other old-line federal agencies. The organic approach asserts the interdependence of the various aspects of the social process. It recognizes that a given action program may give rise to a new situation, for which the responsible agency must accept the consequences. TVA has been obliged to adopt the organic approach

because, as a regional agency, with responsibilities to *both* agriculture and industry, it has to live with the political consequences of what it does or neglects to do.

In contrast, the agencies grouped in the USDA's large family are created to exercise particular agricultural or conservation functions. Any imbalances or conflicts in the organic functioning of the total economy are just too bad, as far as the particular agency is concerned, since it is responsible for doing only its own limited job.

It is possible that in some degree the TVA-SCS squabble of competing ecologists reflects a more fundamental conflict of political philosophies. The soil-conservation districts organized by SCS technicians have unique powers, considerably qualified in many states and rarely exercised in any, with respect to the regulation of land use according to standard land-classification tables. In the January 3, 1947 issue of *Science*, H. H. Bennett, chief of the Soil Conservation Service, writes that "application of land technology is certain to spread around the world either voluntarily or by decree." In the latter case the limitations thereby imposed on the autonomy and initiative of the individual farmer would raise important political questions: ultimately, the question of whether the extension of the powers of central agencies in Washington does not tend, consciously or unconsciously, toward political totalitarianism, and whether regional authorities, by decentralizing administrative responsibility and power, do not provide effective "grass roots" brakes against such a trend.

THERE do exist ways of handling our ecological problem. But certainly any honest attempt to consider ecologically the present status of our American food economy and culture in the framework of existing practices, is bound to lead to troubling conclusions. Most of us, city dwellers especially, live at the end of a food chain that extends all the way from the dinner table to the farmer's soil and his use of it. Some of the links of that chain are dangerously weak. Worse, our politics and our culture are such that we do not find it easy to strengthen them.

For many years it has been known that the unbalanced extractive agriculture generally practiced in this country from the beginning of white settlement has affected adversely not only the yields but the *quality* of food crops. A

survey conducted by Dr. Firman E. Bear of Rutgers University, and reported in the Autumn 1948 issue of *Land*, showed that the mineral content of snapbeans, tomatoes, cabbage, and lettuce tends to increase as we move from the more leached lands of the South to the North, and more sharply as between the older lands of the East to the newer lands of the Midwest and West.

Another example is the notorious fact, referred to casually by Elliot E. Cohen in a recent article in COMMENTARY, that our great milling and baking industries find themselves unable to provide us with a decent loaf of bread. It is not enough to say, as does Mr. Cohen, that these industries are caught in a financial and technological *cul-de-sac*; the *cul-de-sac* is political and cultural too, in the widest sense of these terms.

One notes, in this not untypical human ecological situation, such factors as the vested interests established by the food industries in nutritionally obsolete methods of producing and distributing flour and bread, and in popular food preferences and habits which they themselves are largely responsible for creating or perverting by means of advertising; the utilization of chemistry and other sciences to serve the technical convenience and financial profit of the manufacturer rather than the health and nutrition of the consumer; the progressive liquidation of the consumer interest and the consumer press that began around the turn of the century and was completed during the early New Deal by the emasculation of the Tugwell pure food bill and Henry Wallace's purge of the consumer advocates who had gained a brief foothold in the Department of Agriculture; the food lobbyists' terrorization of the Food and Drug Administration and other government agencies; the "cartelization" of the food scientists by the establishment of industry-supported foundations that control most of the funds available for nutritional research.

Once this situation is grasped it becomes possible to understand the tragicomedy played by our War Food Administration with its wasteful and compromising "enrichment program." (While the public was given to believe that the nutritional elements originally removed from the wheat to make American flour had been restored, actually the "enrichment" restored only a relatively small fraction of the lost minerals and vitamins.) It is also possible to extract wry amusement from the fact that

today if you want to eat a decent piece of bread your best bet is to get yourself committed to one of the New York State mental hospitals. As a result of the joint labors of Commissioner MacCurdy and Dr. Clive M. McCay of Cornell University, these hospitals are now serving the best bread in America.

AT THE root of the human ecological problem, it can be seen, are the *ethical and social* values around which our culture is organized. As Professor Toynbee points out, "Mankind has been the master of its physical environment since the middle of the Paleolithic Age; since that time man's only dangers—but they have been deadly dangers—have come from man himself."

Vogt, Fairfield Osborn (*Our Plundered Planet*, Little Brown, 1948), and others are properly appalled at the rate we are running through what are called "our natural resources." But a natural resource is not something that stands alone, outside *human* nature. The only world we can know is man's world. A natural resource becomes such only because it aids and supports human life. And we can only decide whether we have "enough" reserves by asking the question: What kind of life, at what cultural level, organized on what ecological scale, changing at what rate of speed? Our immediate problem is to construct a viable man-and-nature partnership until we can answer some of these questions.

The limits of the resource base would answer them ultimately—if only these limits were not forever changing under the impact of our expanding technological culture. The crux of the problem then becomes the assertion of human values that will provide a human rationale for this expansion and, in turn, a balanced human ecology within the perceived and protected matrix of the natural environment.

There is no doubt in the minds of the scientists best qualified to judge that today the world could feed itself adequately—if it (or those who are its managers) wanted to do so badly enough. The survival problem is no longer or even primarily a matter of either resources or of techniques. To reiterate, it lies in the field of values. We must make the collective will to survive on a decent and self-respecting human level the central motive of our culture; we cannot hope to secure such survival of the human race and its civilizations as a by-product

of the operation of a value system that has other preoccupations and priorities.

IF THE milling and baking industries are unable to produce a decent loaf of bread, it is because these industries are concerned, logically and necessarily from their point of view, with other problems: the technical one of making a standard loaf carry a maximum of air and water and conceal its staleness from the housewife; the political one, solved largely by subsidizing nutritional research, of preventing academic and government nutritionists from becoming "unreasonable" to the point of trying to function in behalf of the health and survival of the population.

If our nutritionists found themselves unable to put through an intelligent wartime food program it was because they lacked status and power in our society as compared to the hucksters and the lobbyists. The British nutritionists did much better, largely because they enjoy fewer commercial subsidies, on the one hand, and, on the other, higher status and greater influence on government policy.

If government appropriations for basic research in the vital and enormously rewarding fields of soil science, agronomy, genetics, and food chemistry are *relatively* trivial, that is again a reflection of the prevailing pattern of human ideals and aims. Many scientists believe that for a fraction of what we spent on radar during the war, we could come close to solving the food problem and eliminating hunger as a factor in future human history. Quite possibly, three major researches would do it. They are:

1. The production of food yeast from hydrolyzed wood, a process carried to a fairly high point during the war in Germany. This process, when fully developed, promises not only to give us extraordinarily cheap proteins for domestic animals and man, but to raise the whole ecology of land use to a higher, more productive level.

2. The production of phosphate fertilizers that are not fixed in insoluble forms in the soil, thereby enormously increasing the efficiency of our agriculture, and perhaps doubling the life expectancy of world phosphate reserves.

3. Farming the ocean, which is our residual and practically inexhaustible reservoir of minerals essential to life, by mastering the problem of artificial photo-synthesis and training algae to produce cheap fats, sugars, and proteins.

These are not science fictions. All of them are practicable projects, now under way but

financed in terms of thousands of dollars instead of the hundreds of millions required to obtain large results quickly.

THIS, then, would seem to be the point we have reached in history. For the first time we have enough knowledge and enough tools to enable us to understand man's place in nature, to locate our position in time and space, and to perceive the outlines of a planetary ecology, emerging or at least potential. Politics may be either a limiting or a liberating factor with respect to the biological carrying capacity of a given geographical unit. More and more, statesmen will be forced to become ecologists and cut the cloth of political policies and programs to fit the ecological measure of the natural and human resources at their disposal.

As Arthur P. Chew has pointed out (*Ploughshares into Swords*, Harper, 1948), technologically backward countries cannot industrialize beyond the feeding capacities of their respective agricultures without introducing dangerous tensions into the field of international politics; Japan is the most familiar illustration of the point. Certainly our own politics is badly in need of ecological appraisal and adjustment. There are ecological limits even to the productivity of these United States. An ecologist, reading President Truman's recent message on the State of the Union, might well ask: "Is the cold war ecologically practicable? For how long?"

On the other hand, the President's subsequent "bold, new program" for building up the backward areas of the world is clearly on the right track, ecologically. As this plan is being worked out in Washington it provides chiefly for the export of scientists and technologists rather than food and critical minerals. If our entomologists can banish the tsetse fly from the interior of Africa, if our technicians can locate a feasible rail route from Rhodesia to the east coast, these and similar services will do more for Africa, for Europe, and for the world than any indiscriminate sharing of our not unlimited present physical resources would do.

Considered merely as spectacle, our present moment in history has a kind of Miltonic grandeur. By constructing a single global ecology at the highest technological level we can banish hunger from history. Mankind can be as the gods. Or, alternatively, in the epilogue of some unimaginable atomic or bacteriological Armageddon, the residual human life can try again, in an era of primitive peace and quiet.

LETTERS FROM READERS

What Kind of Synagogue?

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The article by Percival and Paul Goodman on current synagogue construction in the January issue was of particular interest to me. As a rabbi with a congregation engaged in erecting a new building, I face some of the problems they discuss. I should like to make several comments from that vantage point.

1. There is an important difference in commitment between the presently Jewish-minded artists and intellectuals and those of us who have kept the Jewish community going in their absence. In search of "likely reality" they are impressed primarily with the symbols in the grand manner that come from the Bible. The drive that activates them is that well-known malaise, "the failure of nerve." I hope that they will still be with us when their nerve (or nerves) is strong again.

Baalei tshuvah—those who return to the fold—cannot choose to forget the twenty or more centuries of Jewish experience that intervene between us and the Bible. It is true that Jewish life in the Galut was confined and constricted. That increasingly made of us particularistic people. Candidly speaking, the "insiders" are, by upbringing and emotional allegiance, passionately committed to that particularism. Abraham, Adam, and Jacob are not therefore, as the Goodmans would have it, "archetypal in the psychoanalytic sense." As symbols the Jew sees in them what Midrash and Jewish history have taught him to see: Abraham is not the father but the rebel, the outsider, and the wanderer; Adam is not an innocent but the man who sins with the forbidden attractions of the outside world; and Jacob is not the wrestler but the Jew in constant torment. The symbols of Hasid, Talmudist, *halutz*, and Haganah soldier are, to the "insider," equally valid and important. Even our own flat American Jewish life is more emotionally significant to us than all the profundities of Mann and Gide. This is after all our own—and our greatest responsibility.

2. It is very revealing of the nature of their Jewish concern that the chief virtue of Jewish theology as understood by the Goodmans is "that it affirms least" and "what few will deny"

—i.e. that "God is one, not a body, and the Messiah will come." This kind of theology, if indeed it is an almost exhaustive statement of Judaism, is certainly unobjectionable to the refined intellectual, no matter what his spiritual antecedents. The only trouble is that "the main point is missing from the book." The Orthodox creed revolves around the election of Israel, its chosenness to be "a kingdom of priests and holy people."

3. It is quite true that a building requires an act of commitment to real use of its functions. Here is where architects, laymen, and rabbis can do great things together. Working together on mere physical plant they can steer future congregational development, by what they put into the buildings. Let it not be forgotten, however, that the face of the American Jewish community is not yet formed. Its religious orientation is still basically undecided. It is too early to know its relationship to Israel. Practically speaking it has not yet learned (or perhaps been able) to give towards its own inner life as it has given to its overseas expenditures.

4. The Goodmans miss rectories for the rabbis in new synagogue plans and attribute their absence to the professionalism, gypsy careers, and lack of concern of the rabbinate. This is hardly the place to defend even partially the vocation which is everyone's favorite target in current Jewish discussion. I hope soon to be able to publish an analysis of the American rabbinate from within, but on the specific point they raise they are wrong. The rabbi has, as they know, never been a rector or priest keeping a building in which "souls are saved." He has traditionally been a teacher of Torah, unrelated, except recently in western Europe and America, to any specific synagogue. Jews do not think of rectories for rabbis because they have not been fashioned by their heritage to regard them as ecclesiastical functionaries.

In conclusion, may I let the cat out of the bag? The architect for our West End Synagogue in Nashville is Percival Goodman. It's very stimulating working with him—and we get along unusually well.

RABBI ARTHUR HERTZBERG

West End Synagogue
Nashville, Tennessee

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I was thunderstruck to hear that somebody was "keeping the Jewish community going"—until I considered that this was a usual opinion of institutional persons, statesmen, deans, and rabbis, who imagine that but for them there would be no social life. The Rabbi's remark is not effrontery, but merely an occupational disease. Personally, I happen never to have been "absent" (simply because, on principle, I do not live by principle, nor practically, but by feelings and intuitions, and this method assures, whatever else, continuity). But in our article we were collecting a number of factors; these "absent" are obviously such a present factor; and I find, working with them, that they are damnably critical, hard to please, and good to attend to.

To make a quick diagnosis, Rabbi Hertzberg suffers from the dual flight-reaction: flight to the particular and flight overseas. Luckily, this is easy to treat. He need merely, as Kafka says, "hammer together a table." I mean literally design, construct, and embellish a table: then the particular will be just the particular and overseas will lose its charms.

To get to the more interesting midrashim. My Bar Mitzva portion was *Lech Lecha*, God says to Abraham: "Get thee out of thy land," from thy father's house, etc. This is precisely why Abraham is a primal father; does the Rabbi imagine that one becomes a *primal* father by remaining the son of Terah? To find fallen Adam, one does not look in Scripture but simply at oneself and one another; it is to learn of the innocent Namer of the Beasts that one looks in Scripture; I am surprised to hear the Rabbi make this communal analogue of a Christian notion. Now Jacob is certainly in torment; also—look again—he is a criminal usurper and a thief; *this* is why I think of him as the Wrestler. The Rabbi's line of interpretation is just what takes the heart out of most Jewish Biblical art (e.g., even Chagall's illustrations): those patriarchs, those criminal adventurers, those divine yeomen, are given bent shoulders.

But what on earth does the Rabbi mean by calling the Hasid, Talmudist, *halutz*, and Haganah soldier "symbols"? Why, half-closing my eyes I can see Rabbi Hertzberg himself in these several roles. Once we begin to think of possible present roles as "symbols," we are lost; action becomes not action but a performance on the Stage of History. As James said of Hegel: "Sober—drunk—all the same." Please, let us eschew this particular kind of pulpit oratory.

Now as to missing the main point of the creed, the Covenant, I too am aware that I never do set it down. And do you know what I think? I think that this article is something

that one does not say; nay, more, it is not an article, it is something that one also does not think, except after the event, the deed; nay, more more, to the extent that it is the case, one does not think of it either before or after, it is simply the case, to the extent that it is the case.

The Rabbi's third paragraph, on functional commitment, is profoundly disturbing. *Im lo achshav, eimatay?*—If not now, when? Let us at least be frank. The Rabbi does not really *want* to; I presume that his heart is overseas. And we artists are timid and lazy; we are afraid to go out on the streets for such vision as we have.

His point on the rectory, however, seems to me to be correct; I think we were wrong (I speak only for myself).

PAUL GOODMAN

New York City

The Comics Controversy

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I should like to offer some comments on Norbert Muhlen's article "Comic Books and Other Horrors," in the January COMMENTARY.

Dr. Muhlen makes a great distinction between the "older, much-censored, and more refined newspaper comic strips," and the "dehumanized, concentrated, and repetitious showing of death and destruction" in the comics magazines. Actually, no such wide dissimilarity exists. I have no desire to enter into internecine warfare with our "respectable" newspaper counterparts, but I offer that *Dick Tracy*, *Kerry Drake*, and a number of other crime strips are every bit as brutal and gory as anything that might be found in even the most violent comics magazines. *Li'l Abner* and *Steve Canyon* certainly capitalize upon the female form divine—nor does their sexiness exist only in the art work; the story situations point in the same direction. Vulgarity exists in *Li'l Abner's* hairy, spitting, burping characters, and also in such characters as B. O. Plenty in *Dick Tracy*—again to mention only a couple of examples. The superbly drawn *Prince Valiant* often sheds considerable amounts of visibly red blood. . . . And the examples I have cited are by no means unique.

Dr. Muhlen, commenting on the possibility of the reader identifying himself with the fictional hero, writes: "The symbol of this theory is the little boy who got a Superman cape on his birthday, wrapped it around himself, and sprang out of the window of his apartment house." Just where the boy got the Superman cape is a mystery to us, since we never manufactured, nor authorized manufacture of, nor ever heard of any *unauthorized*

manufacture of a Superman cape. This notwithstanding, the premise itself is not very solid. I knew, in my own youth, a highly intelligent boy of twelve who leaped from the rooftop of his parents' three-story brownstone house with an umbrella in lieu of a parachute. The fact that he was fortunate enough only to break both legs is probably more important than the fact that his act predated the adventures of Superman by more than two decades. There were foolish children before comics, and juvenile delinquents too. Official Federal Bureau of Investigation figures quote a substantial falling off of the juvenile delinquency rate in the last three years.

Of course it is hardly necessary to make the comparison between comics magazines and some of the so-called classics and semi-classics which many people suggest as a substitute for the comics. The fairy tales are replete with horror, fantasy, and gore. The classics similarly depict scenes of cruelty, murder, and mayhem. . . .

In reference to Dr. Muhlen's remarks on the efforts of certain publishers to apply self-censorship (and which he criticizes with considerable pessimism and sarcasm), let me point out that we, as one of the oldest and largest publishers in the comics magazine field, are heartily in accord with the movement to scrutinize comics. We are definitely opposed to those elements in the industry (even though they constitute a distinct minority) which publish tasteless comics. We at National Comics have been aware of our responsibility—long before there was any practical need to control, apologize, or defend. Our code has guaranteed outstanding comics reading matter from the point of view of story content, of legibility, and of good taste.

We do not deny the aid rendered by prominent professional persons—as a matter of fact, we are grateful for their excellent assistance. Our Editorial Advisory Board consists of such outstanding educators as Dr. Lauretta Bender, Associate Professor of Psychiatry, School of Medicine, New York University; Miss Josette Frank, Consultant on Children's Reading, Child Study Association of America; Dr. C. Bowie Millican, Department of English Literature, New York University; Dr. W. W. D. Sones, Professor of Education and Director of Curriculum Study, University of Pittsburgh; and Dr. S. Harcourt Peppard, formerly Acting Director, Bureau of Child Guidance, Board of Education, City of New York, and now Director, Essex County (New Jersey) Juvenile Clinic.

Rather than serving as mere "window dressing," as Dr. Muhlen implies, the whole Board

meets with the undersigned at intervals, and there is constant individual contact with its members. Miss Frank is in these offices several times a week. Dr. Bender and Dr. Peppard, both of whom are psychiatrists, are available for consultation. Dr. Sones makes continuing studies on such phases as the relation of comics to reading skills and vocabulary building; he comes to this office from his post in Pittsburgh at least once a month. Dr. Millican is at present on leave of absence to the United States Army with which he is serving as Colonel, in charge of the Information and Education Section of the Armed Forces in Germany.

This Editorial Advisory Board was formed in 1941 for the purpose of making professional recommendations to the editors, and has been of inestimable value through the years. The Board has no powers as such, but the professional standing and personal integrity of the individual members would preclude any possibility of their continuing to function on the Board if the publication failed to meet their high standards.

Dr. Muhlen writes: "This education to violence, while hardly presenting the 'clear and present danger' of causing juvenile crime waves, breaks the ground for a future criminal society. Individual insecurity and social anxiety, the common roots of both the murder trend in entertainment and increasing juvenile delinquency, can lead to brute force and terror. . . ." Might I remind Dr. Muhlen that during their training for combat, our soldiers were trained to kill; yet they did not continue to kill on their return to civilian status. Toy manufacturers have produced the simulated implements of war, yet I seriously doubt that they are guilty of instilling in children the desire to fight. We had juvenile delinquents before the advent of comics magazines, and among the many experts who have gone on record as contradicting Dr. Muhlen, let me add what Kenneth Warburton, Director of the Youth Counsel Bureau of the Bronx District Attorney's office, has to offer on the subject. The causes of crimes committed by juveniles, Mr. Warburton says, are broken homes, poverty, excessive drinking, and other unfavorable social conditions.

WHITNEY ELLSWORTH

Editorial Director

National Comics Publications, Inc.
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

If Mr. Ellsworth had read my article more carefully, he would have observed that I, too, objected to current sensational attempts to blame the comic books for juvenile delinquency. What

I tried to emphasize was the more general, less acute effect of comic books—their tendency to encourage the acceptance of violence as the basis of human relations. Mr. Ellsworth does not even attempt to answer this point.

Scenes of cruelty characterize a minority of the newspaper strips, while they form the great mass of comic book content.

The story of the Superman cape was widely told two years ago. *Si non è vero, è ben trovato*.

Mr. Ellsworth states that “classics similarly depict scenes of cruelty, murder, and mayhem.” The basic dissimilarity in the effects of artistic productions and mass-produced, habitually-consumed comic books was extensively discussed in my article.

When Mr. Ellsworth compares the effect of his comic books to the wartime military education when soldiers were “trained to kill,” his opinion seems rather close to mine.

NORBERT MUHLEN

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I should like to congratulate COMMENTARY on its publication of Norbert Muhlen's brilliant article, “Comic Books and Other Horrors.”

Whoever takes the world of comic books for real would have to believe firmly that totalitarians in the garb of comic books publishers attempt slyly to process their customers for a totalitarian society. Our very century appears sometimes as a practical long-range education through horror and “Kitsch,” as produced by comic books publishers.

This “official juvenile entertainment by violence,” as Dr. Muhlen describes it so cogently, certainly amounts to an entertainment machine produced by prefabricated writers and cartoonists in prefabricated language and drawings for prefabricated minds regressing to artificially induced childishness. The results may be prefabricated adults. . . .

I admire profoundly the love of liberty and the tolerance with which the American adults treat the American children, as well as the tolerance with which the American children treat the adults; and I notice with admiration how ingeniously the adults imitate the ways of the children, how freely the children mingle with the adults. Certainly American children seem to be the least inhibited, least educated, and least checked-on children, in fact the freest children of the world, besides being the noisiest, sturdiest, healthiest, and fattest. Contrary to European children, they seem to be free of fear of parents and teachers, policemen and dictators, adults and similar ghosts of the good old times.

If I were childish enough to give uncalled-for advice to the American children, I should ad-

monish them to band together, say in a Democratic and in a Republican party, and elect a Congress and a President and make their own laws against the tastelessness of the prefabricated intellectual baby-food which is being fed to them today.

As I have been for a long time an adult past help and beyond hope, I stick to my belief in the wrongness of censorship and in the righteousness of self-education. Children who are not wise enough to read Shakespeare and the Bible rather than comic books may never find out who is responsible for their lack of healthy language, healthy minds, a healthy society.

HERMANN KESTEN

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I should like to congratulate Norbert Muhlen on his excellent article in the January COMMENTARY. Although I do not share the fears he raises in his last paragraph, the article is outstanding in its objectivity and calmness regarding a subject upon which almost everyone else seems to be emotional.

RUTH A. INGLIS

Department of Sociology
University of Washington
Seattle

The School of Sacred Music

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I read with great interest the article of Kurt List on Jewish music in your February issue.

It was somewhat of a surprise to find that Dr. List does not note the existence of the Hebrew Union School of Sacred Music, which was created last Spring by the Hebrew Union College, and opened with impressive exercises on October 16 of last year.

This School was established after four years of effort to get the seminaries of the other Jewish denominations to join in establishing such an institution. The Hebrew Union College is in this institution aiming to serve not the narrower interests of the Reform community but K'lol Yisroel, the entire community of Israel, without prejudice or discrimination to any point of view.

The School is now concentrating on the offering of training courses to prepare men to serve congregations in the role of cantors and educators, a combined function for which it feels there is a great need, particularly among the smaller congregations of this country.

It has assembled a faculty of outstanding scholars and teachers, including Professor A. W. Binder, Professor Jacob Weinberg, Cantor Gershon Ephros, Rabbi Israel Goldfarb, Lazare Saminsky, Harry Coopersmith, Cantor Moshe

Rudinow, and Professor Eric Werner, who is the leading spirit of the School. Dr. Werner is internationally known for his profound scholarship and his extensive researches in the musicological field. In addition, the students are also taught by members of the faculty of the Education School, including Professor Simon L. Halkin, Abraham Aaroni, Dr. Samuel J. B. Wolk, Dr. Philip E. Kraus, Rabbi Edward E. Klein, Dr. Philip Jaffe, and others. The undersigned is Dean of the institution.

We now have a fine student body of twelve, all of whom have excellent voices, fine musical training, and some Jewish background. The course of study is of three years' duration, and the curriculum covers Nusach, Hazanut, Cantillation, Harmony, Choral Ensemble, Choir Directing, Music Education, as well as History, Hebrew, Bible, Psychology, and Education. As part of the requirements for training, students are placed in week-end cantorial positions in neighboring congregations. The School will in the near future expand its activities to include a department to train teachers for instruction in religious music, organists, choir directors, and directors of music for temples and synagogues. This is the first institution attempting to supply well-trained personnel with a thorough academic as well as practical grounding in all aspects of Judaism and Jewish music.

The Hebrew Union School of Sacred Music is chartered by the Board of Regents of the State of New York and is supported and sponsored by the Hebrew Union College—Jewish Institute of Religion, and is run in cooperation with the Society for the Advancement of Jewish Liturgical Music.

I am sure that your readers will be interested to know that what Dr. List expresses as a wish is a reality in our School.

ABRAHAM N. FRANZBLAU
Dean

Hebrew Union School
of Education and Sacred Music
New York City

[The original "cut-off" date on the musical year covered in Dr. List's article was October 1. When publication of the article was delayed, a few later concerts were reviewed, but no institutional developments were included beyond that date.—Ed.]

Denying "Arab Anti-Semitism"

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "The Arabs' Peculiar 'Anti-Semitism,'" in your February issue, "Anonymous" by a stroke of the pen attributes to all Arabs an

inherent hatred of all Jews. This, I am afraid, is a gross misrepresentation; believing as I do that your magazine is one of the outstanding publications in the United States, I feel that I must offer a correction.

I too resided for many years in the Middle East and came to know well all classes of Arabs. The impression I gathered is just the opposite of that of "Anonymous." The average Arab, whether in Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, or Iraq, never bore any deep-rooted grudge against his Jewish neighbors. Naturally, as a Moslem—and 98 per cent of the Arabs are Moslems—he considers every non-Mohammedan as an infidel, be he Jew or Christian. However, anyone well versed in Arab and Moslem affairs would not hesitate to state that there has always been far greater tolerance of the non-Mohammedan in the Moslem countries than of the non-Christian in the countries of the so-called Western civilization. Discrimination against the Jews in social life, clubs, resort hotels, etc., of the kind familiar in the West is totally unknown in Arab countries.

With the advent of Zionism as a political factor, the leaders and politicians in the various Arab countries of the Middle East found the Palestine issue most advantageous to their domestic political maneuvers. Through the press and in public utterances they incessantly exerted themselves to depict the Jews as enemies. And these politicians were helped behind the scenes by the agents of the British Intelligence and the British Foreign Office. One of the greatest enemies the Jews ever had, the biggest Arab war criminal, and one of Hitler's closest associates, Haj Amin El Hussein, former Mufti of Jerusalem, returned to the Middle East only with the connivance and aid of Sir Walter Smart, Brigadier General Clayton, and their assistants. If ever a war criminal deserved punishment such as was meted out by an international court of justice to Goering and Von Ribbentrop, it was Haj Amin El Hussein. Yet he was allowed to return to roam freely in the Middle East and continue to spread his insidious propaganda against all Jews, not only those of Israel. Here is an Arab who, out of a lust for power, came to regard the Jews with venomous hatred because they stand in the way of his ambitions. It is he, and his like, who are mostly responsible for the present hatred of Jews in the Middle East.

To reiterate: when not incited, the average Arab does not hate Jews. He is perhaps far more tolerant than many learned and educated Christians in Europe and in the United States.

X. Y. Z.

New York City

BOOKS IN REVIEW

The Golden Land

TOMORROW IS BEAUTIFUL. By LUCY ROBINS LANG. Macmillan. 303 pp. \$3.50.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF SOL BLOOM. G. P. Putnam. 345 pp. \$3.50.

AMERICAN SPIRITUAL AUTOBIOGRAPHIES. Edited by Louis Finkelstein. Harper. 276 pp. \$4.00.

Reviewed by NATHAN GLICK

BEHIND the cloying title of Mrs. Lang's energetic and infectious autobiography we discover the symbolic figure of Jewish immigration at the beginning of the century: Chaye the *peddlerke*. Neglected, even by Mrs. Lang (and no one else has recorded her existence, much less her concentrated flavor), she cannot be denied credit for translating the poetic welcome at the base of the Statue of Liberty into the pungent prose of Mott Street. Here, at her stand composed of two empty fruit boxes on which were displayed damaged oranges, old apples, gum drops, and salted pumpkin seeds, Chaye spoke to new arrivals from Russia and Poland. Did they miss the old country? "Everybody should run away from Russia, everyone should come to America. What did you have in Russia? Pogroms you had! Why don't you read the papers and see for yourself? So you don't like America? Woe is me and woe is to Columbus!" Though she could speak no English she educated the newcomers to American ways; for America, she knew, was an attitude, not a dialect. When Lucy's family arrived from the boat, Chaye laid out bread and salt, symbols of plenty; then, "from the folds of her shawls she produced a bottle of castor oil, and ordered each of us to take a dose because we were greenhorns and must purge Europe from our systems."

Purging Europe from their systems characterizes a good deal of the life of immigrant and second-generation Jews at the close of the last

century and the opening of this one. Lucy was surely reacting to the shame of her aunt's arranged marriage in Poland when at fifteen she married her first husband on a five year "trial" basis. And her activism in radical causes represented, in part, a determination not to be oppressed by poverty as her mother was, or by her father's resignation. The humanitarianism endemic among Eastern European Jews found an unexpected range of application in the fluidity of American life. Emma Goldman's brash and fervent anarchism, like Morris Hillquit's reasonable socialism, was based on the double shock of the misery and the openness existing side by side in America.

This was one of the possible responses to the new country. Another was Sol Bloom's more indigenous exploitation of the promise of America. The young Sol was an economic "natural"; every avenue of money-making fed his talents. He was an idea man before the term was invented. Show business, music publishing, exposition-management, importing, real estate: any niche of the economy that could use a quick eye for the main chance made its appeal to this flexible businessman with a flair for publicity. Tammany's proposal that he run for the House of Representatives, where he has served for the past twenty-five years, proved to Bloom that a Jew could aspire to any heights in this country. Indeed, he was chosen precisely because he was "an amiable and solvent Jew." Typically his happiest days in Congress were connected with his membership on the Commission of Industrial Arts and Expositions and his direction of the George Washington Bicentennial celebration. Sent to San Francisco in 1945 to help write the United Nations charter, he exclaims with self-conscious pride: "No! It couldn't be! Why, I was nothing but the child of penniless immigrants who had come from Poland. . . . I was only the little Jewish boy who peddled violets on Market Street. . . ."

For the late Rabbi Simon J. Finkelstein of Congregation Ohev Shalom in Brooklyn, one of fifteen contributors to his son's collection of

American Spiritual Autobiographies, America represents "a closer fulfillment of the Biblical doctrine of human equality and the commandment to love one's neighbor than I had expected to see on earth, short of the coming of the Messiah himself." An Orthodox Jew to the end, he tried, as appeared most becoming for an American, to live amicably and tolerantly with his Reform brethren whose number increased so dishearteningly. And always he aspired to be adequately grateful to God for redeeming him "from the dungeon of Tsarism."

But although Europe has finally purged itself of the Jew, the Jew is not permitted, and perhaps ultimately he is not willing, to purge Europe from his system. For Europe as the world of his childhood or of his parents has placed its indelible mark on him. He did not choose his past, but he can, within the limits of his peculiar experience, choose a way of looking upon that past and dealing with it. Rabbi Finkelstein, committed to America, cannot hide the poignance with which he recalls his life as a rabbinical scholar in Lithuania. "Despite unpleasant social organization, there was in Slobodka cheerfulness and delight in sheer living which is lacking in America." But when he tries to communicate the delights of that life to American neighbors, he writes, "I am confused and inarticulate. I seem to be describing a joy, constant, profound, overwhelming, and transcendent, of which they have no inkling. They do not understand how one can be happy when one is hungry; yet I often have been. They seem to think that life in a crowded dwelling must make one miserable, but in Slobodka it did not. I have never known greater happiness than I witnessed daily in Slobodka." One feels in Rabbi Finkelstein's essay the tragic burden that these separate and inviolate traditions created for him.

Jacob Potofsky's confessional (in the same volume), like Mrs. Lang's, documents the continuity of Europe and America, a more secular Europe than Rabbi Finkelstein's and consequently a more viable America. In both Mr. Potofsky and Mrs. Lang the impulse toward social idealism was native and inevitable and both devoted their adult years to the labor movement. But the similarity ends here. If there is a pattern to Mrs. Lang's life, it is the stubborn search for personal independence in the context of a life devoted to others; while Mr. Potofsky, who succeeded Sidney Hillman as

president of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, lived out his adult life as Hillman's alter ego and is modest enough to be proud of this. There is something depressing in the self-abnegation and failure of the critical sense produced by his hero-worship. The decline from the world vision initiated by his reading of Russian-Jewish writers and by listening to his older brothers, one a social revolutionist and the other a follower of Herzl, to the provincialism which deifies Hillman and sees greatness in a program dedicated to raising "higher and higher" the worker's standard of living, typifies the constriction of heart and mind that has affected the radical and labor movements as a whole during the past generation.

Lucy Robins Lang shows traces of this loss of standards—in her unqualified praise of Dan Tobin (despite his know-nothingness) and William Green (despite his stodginess), in her blanket disapproval of the CIO—but these matter far less than the libertarian fervor which involved her without pause in the struggle for civil rights during the first quarter of the century. Her account of a nomadic life that touched the core and the fringes of every protest movement—anarchist, Wobbly, socialist, pacifist—has a good deal of the drive and devil-may-care atmosphere that pervades the narrative portions of John Dos Passos' *42nd Parallel*. This period was the great epoch of American radicalism. Never again were our rebels to be so unconcerned with their own security, or so completely the enemy of society, or so idiosyncratic. Mr. Potofsky represents the best that remains of the labor-socialist tradition: he is dedicated to improved social insurance.

THE Lang and Bloom autobiographies remind us of a time when public attention centered on events and not on the Jew as special participant in events. In the newspaper scandal that broke out around Mrs. Lang's youthful contract-marriage, the target was free love; nothing was said of the fact that Lucy and Ben Robins were Jewish. Sol Bloom may remark that "Jews are a lonely people," but there is no hint that discrimination ever restricted the free flow of Mr. Bloom's inordinate gregariousness. It is only in recent experiences that the Jew as scapegoat and Jewishness as a burden appear in their accounts. Two incidents illustrate Mr. Bloom's kind of awareness. As chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee in 1941, he was expected to introduce the resolution calling for a

declaration of war. Instead, the rules were suspended and John McCormack, the Majority Leader, moved the resolution. "I shrank," writes Bloom, "from exposing the Jews of a future generation to the possible charge that this war had been set in motion by a Jew." In 1943, Bloom was a delegate to the Bermuda Conference on the Refugee Problem, which refused to negotiate a ransom for the remaining Jews of Central Europe or to divert a single ship for their rescue. Mr. Bloom supported this resolution and was greatly concerned lest he give the impression that he favored Jews over other refugee groups. With a guilty reversion to diplomatic language, he avoids mentioning the meaning of the decision: the final guarantee of doom for a million Jews. This does not prevent him from boasting that he is an old supporter of Zionism.

What was the attitude toward America of those Eastern European Jews who, willingly or perforce, remained at home? In 1928, before Nazis had appeared on the scene, Mrs. Lang made a trip with her journalist husband (Harry Lang of the Jewish *Forward*) to his native village of Skudas in Lithuania. They found that the old way of life, which Rabbi Finkelstein remembered with such pleasure, had vanished. There were only broken families, potential immigrants to America, barred by quotas, not unlike the stateless millions in Europe today. Asked if they did not feel bitter, the Rabbi of Skudas replied: "One does not hate the unapproachable woman of his heart; one longs, weeps, and hopes for her." America has not purged itself of Europe and Europe refuses desperately to give up its vision of America.

The Ghetto as Myth

ON THIS SIDE NOTHING. By ALEX COMFORT. Viking. 192 pp. \$2.50.

Reviewed by GEORGE J. BECKER

THE search for a modern *mythos* through which to exhibit man's fate with a simplicity and austerity equal to that achieved by the Greeks has led Mr. Comfort to use the ghetto and the perennial exile of the Jew as universal symbols. The result is a remarkable book: remarkable in that the author, writing with convincing terseness and vividness about Jews and the ghetto of an unnamed North African city, is not a Jew and has never seen North Africa; remarkable above all for the force of its statement of the

contemporary dilemma, though it carries implications that will be accepted by neither Jew nor Gentile.

Schmul Weinstock, coming secretly to his family in North Africa because he is sick of running, makes a discovery: "You only stop running when you go Gentile." He admonishes one of his friends: "Be a Jew and start putting things by against the time when you have to run." Coincident with his arrival, the Germans force the Italian authorities of the town to convert the Jewish quarter into a ghetto, into which are also herded the tribesmen from the surrounding hills. All are subjected to a life of increasing deprivation, to the point where even water and electricity are cut off. After the British take over the town, there is no change, and Schmul is confirmed in his belief in the universality of the Jewish condition. "Once it has gone, you don't look for the bad weather to end, and you don't cheer the incoming general because he stands for Cease Fire. . . ." When his fellows complain of British action, or lack of action, he asks: "What did you expect? . . . We haven't stopped being Jews." The story is an account of Schmul's increasing alienation from all established social ties. In the end he is an object of suspicion to the British and the Jews alike, and at last he slips away as secretly as he has come, accompanied—ironically—by Franzetti, the former Fascist governor of the town, and a deserting British officer named Goldberg.

The ghetto symbol is chiefly useful in giving a sense of timeless repetition, of what recurs at every trough in human history when the choice is between holding on to life or settling to the bottom, between being Jews or Gentiles. "Jews are not born," Schmul concludes, "but made; everyone who runs, who disobeys, who prefers living is a Jew. Doesn't he carry his own ghetto round with him, in every country, at every time?" The Jew is one with the bums, the jailbirds, the deserters who start a new culture under one's feet and crack the old society "like mushrooms cracking a pavement."

He is essentially a lonely man. The ghetto may be a protection, a shell; Jewry itself serves the same function. But it is an illusion to think that the Jew can come home to his people. Schmul is disgusted by the lack of either solidarity or understanding between the townsmen and peasants in the ghetto. He despairs at finding a lot of bourgeois lawyers playing at being Jews, clutching at the appearance of security, squabbling over material possessions, or, at their

most daring and energetic, seeking only to establish in Palestine an imitation of the society of their oppressors. He is willing to admit, theoretically, that there is value in the kind of revolutionary who builds up a model of living for others to see, but for himself—"I could not leave exile, because, as the Zionists who didn't understand me kept saying, I belonged there."

THE moral future of such a man is not clear. His nine months in the ghetto are marked by certain clear refusals, but concrete affirmations are still to come. In their absence the author seems to be saying that in a prolonged crisis of dissolution, such as the present, the man of good will can do nothing but keep himself alive, unencumbered by things of this world. It is by the bartering of his last possession, a wrist watch, that Schmul is able to escape from his jail.

His refusals are significant. Though he is attracted by Rachel, he will not take advantage of his opportunities; the ties of the flesh are not for him. Nor will he accompany her and others on a dangerous escape to Palestine. He refuses also the way of violence. He is convinced that killing is not the most irresponsible thing we do, and that he might easily make out a case for assassination if only there were any evidence that the right people got killed, like "Titus Oates and General Franco"; yet he temporizes twice in the case of the German deserter Gellert, jeopardizing both his own integrity and the safety of the community, and finally allowing himself to serve as a passive instrument in Gellert's murder.

As experience the book is powerful. As statement it is over-simplified. The division between Jew and Gentile, between creative seed and inert earth, encounters semantic barriers a mile high and is no more useful than any other arbitrary dichotomy. The Jew will feel that he has been verbalized out of existence, that by becoming nothing but leaven, a spirit of regeneration, a symbol of human striving in the face of obsolescent social forms and values, he has been made into a stereotype just as unreal and just as disturbing as the one the anti-Semite has created. He will with some justice inquire why people can't let Jews be Jews, why their friends and enemies alike persist in making them something other than they are. He may, indeed, be flattered that his case and that of his fellows in these latter years has so impressed the minds of men that it has become a myth capable of supporting broad generalizations about the

fate of man. But to become part of a myth is to be lost sight of as a person, to be forced to a new kind of conformity to a stereotype, to have a new dimension added to the Procrustean bed in which he lies.

Cross-Currents in Islam

HISTORY OF THE ISLAMIC PEOPLES. By CARL BROCKELMANN. Translated from the German by Joel Carmichael and Moshe Perlmann. G. P. Putnam. 582 pp. \$6.00.

MINORITIES IN THE ARAB WORLD. By A. H. HOURANI. Oxford. 140 pp. \$3.25.

INSIDE PAN-ARABIA. By M. J. STEINER. Packard and Company. Chicago. 237 pp. \$3.00.

Reviewed by MORDECAI KOSOVER

IN HIS Medina period, the prophet Mohammed laid the foundations of his faith to be spread among infidels, instructing his followers thus: "Believers! Obey Allah (God) and the Apostle: and render not your works in vain. . . . Be not fainthearted then; and invite not the infidels to peace when ye have the upper hand: for Allah is with you and will not defraud you of the recompense of your works." Furthermore, the sword is to be applied to "those who join other gods with God." "And when the sacred months are passed, kill those who join other gods with God wherever ye shall find them; and seize them, besiege them, and lay wait for them with every kind of ambush. . . ." Thus, we have the *jihad*, the "holy war," which is always evoked when Islam is allegedly endangered—a familiar feature underlying recent political developments.

However, the fundamental principle of Islam orthodoxy, allowing for differences of opinion and yet holding the followers of the various schisms together, is the *ijma*, "agreement." It is practically the same as the canon of Catholic truth formulated by Vincent of Lerins, which for Islam is to be expressed in the single formula: whatever the community of Islam has agreed upon at any time, is of God. The evident *vox populi* was to be the voice of God, and the agreement reached in any question by the community is therefore binding on every believer. Thus the unity of Islam was assured.

Also to this effect is the alleged saying of Mohammed: "My people will never agree in an error."

Thus, a religious concept served to unify the Islamic community of nations, the political history of which is thoroughly discussed by the distinguished Semitic scholar Carl Brockelmann. To compress the wealth of material encompassing all Islamic peoples, and to keep the proper dimensions in covering the period from pre-Islamic Arabia down to 1939—the date of the publication in German—in only one volume, is an achievement in itself.

The English reader now has the opportunity to avail himself of a clear presentation of Islam and its expansion, development, and achievements. All this is told in five sections: the Arabs and the Arab Empire, the Islamic Empire and its dissolution, the Ottoman Turks as the leading power in Islam, Islam in the 19th century, and the Islamic states after the First World War. In order to bring the book up to date, a brief sketch of events since 1939 has been added by the orientalist Moshe Perlmann, who is intimately familiar with the Near East and at present teaches Islamic subjects at the New School for Social Research. Both he and his collaborator, Joel Carmichael, have discharged their tasks of translating the volume from the original German with skill and elegance. Additional footnotes by the translators refer to recent publications on the subject, and help to provide a useful volume at a time when the need for accurate information on a complicated subject is great.

THE complex problem of minorities in the Arab world is discussed by Mr. A. H. Hourani in a study covering Egypt, Palestine, Transjordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq. The term "Arab world" is employed here in a rather narrow sense. Yemen and Saudi Arabia, for reasons unexplained, are excluded, as are the predominantly Arabic-speaking countries of North Africa: Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, French Morocco, Spanish Morocco, and Tangier. But even this limited area is not adequately dealt with by the author, who, undoubtedly aware of his shortcomings, emphasizes in his preface that the book "is not to be regarded as a definitive work, but rather as a tentative introduction to a subject which has not yet been dealt with fully and objectively." That the difficulties of the subject are real is illustrated by the fact that out of a total population of twenty-eight

million in the countries under review, the minorities are stated to number seven and a half million of a heterogeneous racial, religious, and linguistic origin.

The position of these minorities is revealed to be one of apprehension and insecurity. On the surface, Jews and Christians, the "People of the Book" (i.e., the Old and New Testament), are accorded toleration and protection in the Islamic state. However, due to the disabilities imposed upon them for centuries as "protected people," they occupy an inferior status vis à vis a fanatically religious and politically chauvinistic majority.

How do the Jews (numbering between 250 and 280 thousand) fare in these countries according to Mr. Hourani's account?

Egypt: (70,000-80,000 Jews) "Beneath the surface . . . there is a considerable dislike for them, based partly on religious prejudice, partly on their economic position."

Transjordan: This newly-created kingdom, under the rule of King (former Emir) Abdullah Ibn Hussein, is *judenrein*, as is Saudi Arabia, under King Ibn Saud, where a non-Moslem is forbidden entrance to the territory.

Lebanon: No account of the position of Jews in this predominantly Christian Arab state is to be found, although in the table of population their number is given as 5,666. However, they certainly enjoy greater freedom than their brethren in neighboring Syria.

Syria: "Although for the most part they (i.e. the Jews in Damascus and Aleppo) are not Zionists, Zionism has affected them; very many of them have settled in Palestine, and those who are left cannot be wholly unaffected by the rising wave of Arab hostility to Zionism."

Iraq: "There is a considerable hostility towards them, because of traditional religious hatred and their economic power. . . . It is inevitable . . . that some of the hostility which Arabs feel for Jewish designs on Palestine should be directed to the Jews in their midst. The growing hostility showed itself most clearly in the incidents which followed the collapse of Rashid Ali's movement in Bagdad in 1941. In the past few years, many Iraqi Jews, aware that their future in Iraq is dark, have emigrated to Palestine and America in search of greater security or opportunity."

THE last quotation is a yardstick of Mr. Hourani's objectivity. The pogrom of the Bagdad Arab populace in June 1941 in which one

hundred and twenty Jews were killed, many hundreds wounded, and much Jewish property destroyed, is casually disposed of as "incidents." Nor is mention made of the fact that emigration to Palestine is barred by the Iraqi government, and that, as a rule, Iraqi Jews are not allowed to leave the country. There is a similar failure of objectivity when Mr. Hourani discusses the changes that came about during the Second World War. Political tendencies in the Islamic movement, the collapse of France, and the rise of Russia, and the Allied promises stemming from the Atlantic Charter, are discussed briefly, while the influence of Fascist and Nazi propaganda upon Arab nationalism is utterly disregarded. The impact of the latter upon such groups as the Ikhwan al-Muslimin (Moslem Brotherhood), a fanatical Moslem organization, and Misr al Fatat (Young Egypt), a fascist organization in Egypt, both of which indulge in open incitement against Jews, is overlooked.

Entirely disappointing is the solution of the problem offered by Mr. Hourani. In speaking of the possibility of bringing about a world community through the creation of a super-national state, and the recalcitrance of the spirit of Islam today which in practice is no more than the "contemptuous toleration of the strong for the weak," the reader is offered a metaphysical prescription of—a "mutual love in God and for God which alone can open the heart to the love of all men."

THE title of Dr. Steiner's book, *Inside Pan-Arabia*, is meaningful and intriguing, and raised the hope that it would complement Mr. Hourani's study. Its author is introduced by the publishers as a "student of Oriental languages and Semitics, as well as a keen analyst of Arab history." But a reading of the book is a disillusionment.

The author has a "thesis" which is gradually built up along the following lines: The Arab is inferior with respect to culture, ethics, and social institutions, and the Arab world is a conglomerate of nations unable to weld themselves into a common political entity. This being the case, Dr. Steiner finds it easy to indulge in ethnic generalizations. Thus he writes: "Along with the extreme individualism goes the quick temper of the Arab, which in turn is responsible for a volatile mind bereft of systematic reasoning." While denying the existence of democratic forces anywhere among Arabs, Dr. Stein-

er still finds it possible to state that "a mutual partnership of Jewish-Arab democratic forces against an outworn and decaying imperialism would bring peace to the troubled Middle East."

Outwardly, Dr. Steiner covers a large area, and the chapters are captioned with high-pitched journalese. "The Desert Strikes Again," "Ibn Saud's Heroic Ascent," "The Holy Land of Unholy Machinations," "The Slumbering Maghreb" are the titles of a few chapters and should persuade the most tolerant reader that he will have to go elsewhere for an adequate discussion of Islam in the modern world.

The Origins of the Alphabet

THE ALPHABET. By DAVID DIRINGER.
Philosophical Library. 607 pp. \$12.00.

Reviewed by THEODOR H. GASTER

THE invention and diffusion of the alphabet, while one of the greatest of human achievements, is also one of the deepest of historical mysteries. Moreover, so much new light has been cast upon it by recent archaeological discoveries that all previous treatments of the subject, all past theories about it, and all such expositions of it as are to be found in the general run of encyclopedias and popular works of reference are now hopelessly out of date. Both professional students and laymen will therefore owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. David Diringer, the noted alphabetologist, for having brought together within one compact and eminently readable volume all of the latest and most authoritative available information.

Not only does Dr. Diringer reproduce and describe almost every known alphabet from antiquity to the present day and from one end of the earth to the other, but he also discusses the history of each and in each case provides a bibliography for further study. Furthermore, by way of introducing these detailed expositions, Dr. Diringer devotes several prefatory chapters to a discussion of pre-alphabetic and non-alphabetic systems of writing, including those—like the "ideographic"—the purpose of which was to convey notions rather than to reproduce the actual sound of spoken words. Last but by no means least, there is an excellent account of the rival theories which have been advanced to explain the origin of our own particular alphabet, and in this the author has incorporated a

great deal of useful and otherwise fairly inaccessible material bearing on recent epigraphic discoveries in Palestine, Syria, and the Sinai Peninsula.

The extent and range of this amazing collection may be gauged by the mere mention of some of the scripts discussed. These include: Egyptian, Cretan, and Hittite hieroglyphs; the syllabic cuneiform of the Sumerians, the Babylonians, and the Assyrians; the crude pictographic alphabet of rock-carvings in Sinai; the Phoenician, Greek, and Italic alphabets (from which our own derives); the Kharosthi, Brahmi, and later scripts of India; the Gupta writing of Central Asia; Tibetan, Passepa, and Lepcha characters; the less familiar systems of further-India, such as those of the Khmers in Cambodia, of the Mons in Burma, and of the Shans in Siam; the Armenian and Slavonic alphabets; and such mysterious forms of writing as those of the Mayans and of Easter Island. Moreover, not content with this profusion of riches, Dr. Diringer also deals with alphabets invented in modern times by primitive peoples, such as that of the Cherokees devised in 1821 by a native called Sequoya, or that introduced, at the beginning of the present century, by the Cameroon chieftain Njoya. In short, it may be said that, in more senses than one, the author presents the alphabet from A to Z!

ON THE whole, however, the book is stronger in assembling evidence than in construing it and it will likely prove more valuable as a compendium than as an original contribution to research. It is possible, for example, to question the validity of Diringer's conclusion that alphabetic writing, in its basic consonantal form, was invented by the Semites of Palestine and Syria in the earlier part of the second millennium BCE. The evidence upon which this view is based is that the earliest specimens of alphabetic writing thus far known are some semi-pictographic inscriptions from Palestine and Sinai and the peculiar cuneiform script of the Canaanites at Ras Shamra-Ugarit in Syria, all of which date around that general period. But is not Diringer here confusing origin with first recorded appearance? After all, there are whole epochs of previous history still unknown to us. Moreover, if it be objected that, so far as present evidence goes, documents written before 1700 BCE invariably use pictographic or syllabic, but never alphabetic, forms of writing,

it may be replied that the alphabet could very well have been developed out of signs (at first pictographic, then stylized and linear) which had originally been reserved for such special purposes as marking pottery or engraving seals and which never reached the status of formal scripts. In that case, it is readily conceivable that other peoples may likewise have made their selections from this common body of signs and, by giving them different phonetic values or by making a different choice, have created independent alphabets, not yet recovered. Nor, indeed, is this view without a measure of support, for the fact is that alphabetiform signs do actually appear on early Mediterranean and Aegean pottery and that they are subsequently found incorporated into more than one script. The student who wishes to trace the true evolution of the alphabet would then have to start from the origin and successive transmutations and adoptions of these signs, rather than from the particular selection of them which happens to have been made by the Semites of Syria and Palestine; and the claim that the latter were the "onlie begetter" of alphabetic writing would obviously prove premature.

DIRINGER's second argument is that the earliest alphabet was purely consonantal and that this is in peculiar accord with the genius of Semitic languages which are based on vocalic and other modifications of consonantal "roots." This is an argument advanced also by others, but it is time that someone pointed out that it rests on an error of method. For the fact is that the so-called consonantal "roots" are but a grammarian's abstraction; they are a device used in analyzing the language, but it must not be assumed that they ever existed in speech. By the same token, the division of sounds into consonants and vowels is no more than a device of linguistic analysis, and it must not be given such objective reality as to make us believe that it was actually represented in writing. When, for example, a Semite wrote the three signs D B R, he was not writing *consonants* but *symbols of sounds*, and the fact is that he was writing *Da-Ba-R*, *Du-Ba-R* or whatever form he required, each sign combining what we happen to have analyzed into consonant and vowel. That separate signs were later introduced for the vowel-element does not disprove this; it means only that greater orthographic refinement was eventually attained. In other

words, the letter D originally stood both for purely "consonantal" D and also for "vocalized" *da, di, du*.

One may question also whether Diringer is justified in rejecting the widespread view that the characters of the semi-pictographic inscriptions found in Palestine and Sinai are the prototypes of the Phoenician, and hence ultimately of our own alphabet. His opinion is based on what appears to be an excessive scepticism regarding the validity of recent decipherments. These, he holds, are much too uncertain to serve as a basis for far-reaching theories. The fact is, however, that we are not required to accept the whole of those decipherments in order to prove the case. It is sufficient only to recognize—what no one can deny—that the word *mtn* (gift) has been correctly read on the celebrated ewer from Lachish and the word *B'lt* (goddess) in the inscriptions from Sinai. For, in the first case, the letter *m* is represented by a wavy line depicting water, the letter *t* by a cross or "mark," and the letter *n* by the figure of a serpent. Now, it cannot be fortuitous that the later name for *m* was *mem*, meaning "water," that *t* was called *tav* or "mark," and that the Ethiopic name for *n* is *nakhash*, "serpent." Similarly, it cannot be a coincidence that, in the second case, the 'ayin of *B'lt* has the form of an eye and that this is what the name 'ayin really means. Surely, this proves that the pictographic characters are, in fact, more or less identical with those primitive forms from which the letters of the alphabet were derived and after which they were named. Moreover, if the later forms of M, T and N be compared, it becomes obvious at once that they are but latter-day equivalents of those found on the Lachish ewer.

DIRINGER charges the present reviewer with having made an "unconvincing" comparison of the signs on a puzzling inscription from Balu'a (Transjordan) with those of other Semitic scripts. But on the only occasion on which the reviewer dealt with that inscription the very point he made was that any such comparison was untenable, however seductive it might seem! Similarly, when Diringer rejects the theory of Flinders Petrie and its later reformulation by the reviewer to the effect that the characters of the alphabet may have been borrowed from geometric signs in use throughout the Mediterranean area, he omits to point out

that the reviewer has always insisted, as a premise of this theory, on the distinction between the origin of an alphabet and that of its constituent signs, and that he has never assumed that the signs which were borrowed had from the start the particular phonetic values which were later assigned to them. Since, therefore, Diringer himself concedes that "the great inventor [may have] used some of these signs," it is a little difficult to see why he spurns the theory as a whole.

Nevertheless, despite points of disagreement and of major or minor objection, the fact remains that Diringer has produced what is beyond doubt the best, most up-to-date and most readable of all existing works on the alphabet. The critic who assails this or that particular argument or who notes this or that particular defect, must do so—as does this reviewer—in a spirit of most sincere appreciation and admiration of the author's amazing industry and erudition.

Social Science Parochialism

POWER AND PERSONALITY. By HAROLD D. LASSWELL. Norton. 262 pp. \$3.00.

Reviewed by DENNIS H. WRONG

HAROLD LASSWELL was one of the first American social scientists to introduce psychiatric concepts into general social inquiry. The books he wrote in the early 1930's, although characterized by a crude and over-exuberant use of Freudian ideas, were valuable pioneer attempts to suggest the relevance of psychiatry to political science, economics, history, and sociology. However, outside of vague and verbose exhortations urging social scientists to help implement democratic values, Dr. Lasswell's new book merely succeeds in indicating that a decade of social-science research, not to mention explosive historical events, has had little effect on his own thinking.

We are told in this book that men in positions of power are often motivated by unconscious drives which influence their official decisions and actions. Political conduct, in other words, is co-extensive with human conduct in general and can be expected to provide data for the psychiatrist. Dr. Lasswell describes various neurotic "character types" who can find outlets for repressed impulses in particular official tasks. Thus, because the role of administrator requires

taking account of many formal rules, a "compulsive character" may seek security in rigid and inflexible conformity to the minutiae of administrative regulations. Or the "dramatizing type" may utilize public office as a means of gaining the excessive deference from others which his personality craves. Since Dr. Lasswell avoids saying that *all* bureaucrats are compulsive characters; or that *all* government officeholders who confront the public are pathological self-dramatists, what he actually asserts is merely that neurosis, like vice, rears its head among the mighty as well as the meek and humble.

This conclusion is a far cry from "the analysis of the motives, skills, and experience that figure in the relation between leaders and those who are led" which the book purports to offer. The contribution of psychiatry to the understanding of politics is here limited to a recital of the by now familiar ABC's of childhood frustration and conflict, and to illustrations of how these may effect the public careers of political actors. Such an approach in Dr. Lasswell's case involves mechanistic reduction of adult conduct to its infantile origins. It is pertinent to ask whether a given political role might not itself have a uniform impact on the personalities of the actors, regardless of their "character types." Conceivably, for example, "compulsiveness" in administrators may be a common response to frustrations imposed by the routine and highly formalized social relationships of a bureaucracy, rather than a symptom of a neurosis rooted in individual childhood experiences which are projected into the work situation. An inquiry into the extent to which American political institutions create such "occupational personalities" would be vastly more enlightening than Dr. Lasswell's simplification of the concrete realities of political life by treating them as psychoanalytic habits.

THE second half of the book deals with the requirements of democratic leadership. According to Dr. Lasswell, the sole obstacle to the realization of a fully democratic society is human destructiveness. "Human destructiveness," he says, "is of two kinds: destructive impulses and destructive practices. Practices are destructive when they express or arouse destructive impulses. Destructive impulses are the initial phases of acts which, if brought to expression, destroy congenial and creative interpersonal relations." This amounts to saying that destructive impulses are those which result in destruc-

tive practices, while practices are destructive if they are the outcome of destructive impulses. It is difficult to see where one goes from here.

Since destructiveness is made synonymous with "anti-democratic," physicians and social scientists are urged to develop a "social psychiatry of democracy" to save us from totalitarian rule, and are repeatedly castigated for their failure to become "policy minded"—a Lasswellian euphemism for taking an active part in defending and attaining democratic goals. This is perhaps a valid criticism of most American social scientists (although one which was made much more directly ten years ago by Robert S. Lynd in *Knowledge for What?*), but Dr. Lasswell buries it under an elaborate and esoteric jargon. Thus, acquiring accurate knowledge about society is called "the intelligence function," the clarification of desired social goals is called "specifying our value-variables," the understanding of single events through relating them to their larger context is labelled "configurative thinking," and "social self-observatories" are recommended as a means of keeping in touch with current historical trends. One wonders what is gained by applying such labels to these elementary prerequisites of political thinking.

There is a parochialism about Dr. Lasswell which is peculiarly modern and which is quite distinct from the common image of the idealistic and unworldly scholar in his "ivory tower." It is the parochialism of a new type of academician, eager to go to Washington, and regarding himself as a social technologist who can solve the crisis of our time by tankering with the institutional machinery while avoiding direct alignment with the big political and economic power groups. The limitations of such a viewpoint are apparent in Dr. Lasswell's final "whither-are-we-drifting" chapter where he writes that since both classical socialist and classical *laissez-faire* capitalist thought stress democratic values, those who speak today in the name of socialism and those who speak in the name of business should unite to defend a "socio-business world" against "the anti-socialist and anti-business elements in society . . . who are potential rulers of a world concentration camp." These menacing figures are not further identified.

Dr. Lasswell seems to regard history as a sinister realization of man's destructive impulses, which the "social psychiatrist" can reveal and control. An institutional view of history has its inadequacies, but this view is hardly more satisfying.

Boundaries of Belief

THE PROTESTANT ERA. By PAUL TILLICH.

Translated with a concluding essay by James Luther Adams. University of Chicago Press. 323 pp. \$4.00.

Reviewed by IRVING KRISTOL

THESE eighteen essays by an outstanding Protestant thinker are so compact and significant that they require extended commentary and criticism. All that can be done in this brief review is to point to some of the leading themes and the way they are used. Actually there is only one theme: "The first element in Protestantism is and must always be the proclaiming of the human boundary situation."

The concept of the "borderline" or "border situation" runs through all of Tillich's writings in much the same way that all of Thomas Mann's work weaves about the tension between life and the artist, with a self-conscious and creative egocentricity. In the autobiographical sketch that formed the first part of his *Interpretation of History* (1936), Tillich wrote: "The concept of the borderline might be a fitting symbol of the whole of my personal and intellectual development. It has been my fate, in almost every direction, to stand between alternative possibilities of existence, to be completely at home in neither, to take no definitive stand against either." From this vantage point he has acted as a productive mediator between faith and reason, theology and philosophy, Lutheranism and socialism, religion and culture. And, again like Mann, Tillich has deftly universalized his predicament; he has elevated the "border situation"—between the infinite and the finite, the conditioned and the unconditional, faith and anxiety—into the essence of the human condition, and the locus of the religious declaration.

The religious declaration has two main clauses. The first proclaims the permanent crisis which lends its name to "crisis theology." This refers ultimately to man's separation from God and his perpetual judgment under God; the crisis in mankind is an eternal one that results from man's being a spiritual animal who exists tensely on that borderline which is the human line.

The second clause proclaims the "Protestant principle," which in turn consists of the "re-

ligious obligation" and the "religious reservation." The religious obligation is to work God's will on earth, to establish justice and love in economic and social relations (Tillich is a devout socialist), and to hasten the day of messianic redemption. The religious reservation is to protest against any absolute claim to truth made in the name of a relative, historical reality—whether that reality be a totalitarian state, a religious institution, a dogmatic creed, or a social movement—and it is thus possible to be loyal to the Protestant principle without belonging to a Protestant, or any other church. There is an inevitable trend in human communities toward idolatry—the worship of certain institutions and beliefs as having absolute and unquestionable validity, as being at long last "the final word." What the Protestant principle asserts is that the only absolute truth is this: man can never attain absolute truth—"the final word" is always with God and it comes as a judgment upon man. The Protestant era, Tillich says, is coming to an end with a thunderclap of moral and social collapse; but whatever the religious forms that the future will throw up, they too will be subordinate to the Protestant principle.

It is obvious that this approach is less a product of primitive, uncontained faith than of sophisticated disillusionment. Not disillusionment with God, to be sure, but with men and their works—even with religious men and their works. Of all theologians, Tillich is the most sensitive to history. The future, as he sees it, is already full of incessant, stubborn idolatries in which some men who claim the absolute truth will battle those who deny it. Lest such a prospect lead to nihilistic despair, Tillich has discounted it in advance, and has incorporated it into an enduring perspective on the human condition. But if all philosophy and theology can be misused by fate, what is the point of it all? The point, Tillich answers, is that there is one belief that is above history: "the certainty that fate is divine and not demonic"—the religious confidence that the world is to be redeemed.

Tillich knows that at present organized religion is, on the whole, a pretty dreary affair, and as a religious radical he is not so much concerned with crying woe as with reorganizing society, and turning up a soil into which religious institutions will be able to sink their roots. But he also believes that there is today

a vast, unrecognized religious impulse—unrecognized because it operates outside the churches and because it often considers itself non-religious or even anti-religious. To meet the challenge of this, Tillich daringly extends Luther's doctrine of "justification through faith," and discovers the possibility of discerning God "at the very moment when all known assertions about 'God' have lost their power."

Tillich's doctrine of "justification through faith" involves a re-definition of "the religious": it is no longer a belief in a supernatural being but rather a state of "ultimate concern," a sense of something ultimate, unconditional, and all-determining—and this may express itself in secular as well as in religious forms. Even unbelief or disbelief can be an ultimate concern, and as such are testimony to truth: thus, "he who seriously denies God affirms him"—the important word here is *seriously*. Doubt, despair, disgust, denial—all of these can be religious provided that they represent an experience of the "unconditional," and the acknowledgement of an absolute claim upon one's person. (Tillich's idea of the "unconditional" is too subtle and complicated to be discussed here. Briefly, it is a quality we experience with our whole being in encountering reality, an existential intuition.) A demonically

inspired person, as well as a divinely inspired one, testifies to the existence of the unconditional, the infinite—as something he fears and refuses to embrace.

This process of "justifying through faith" those who most vehemently reject faith and justification has something of the air of a debater's trick. But it is, I think, more than that; and we seem implicitly to concede its relevance when the term "religious" is applied to such "unbelieving" writers as D. H. Lawrence or James Joyce. Somehow it seems appropriate.

It is still too early to estimate the sum total of Tillich's contribution to modern thought. His work will certainly excite criticism for many years to come, and in some respects he has left himself vulnerable. (His use of Marxist concepts tends to be stiff, and his references to scientific method are arguable.) It is possible, too, that the strident intellectualism of his religious thought is only the last gasp of religious futility; one is tempted to say with Hobbes that "It is with the mysteries of our religion, as with wholesome pills for the sick, which swallowed whole have the virtue to cure, but chewed are for the most part cast up again without effect."

BOOK REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

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